

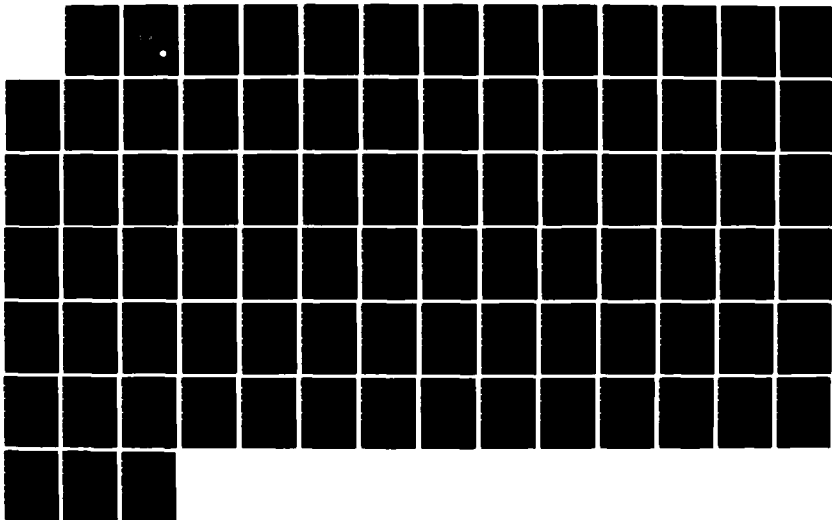
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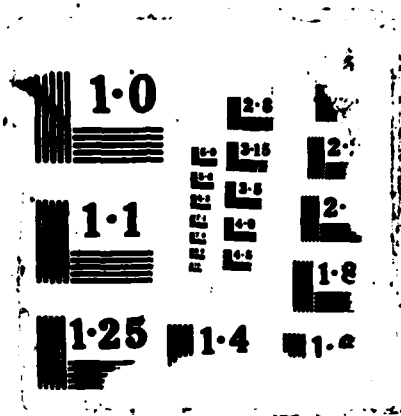
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THE NAVY AND COMBINED OPERATIONS:
A CENTURY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE,
1853-1945

by

DR. JACOB W. KIPP
Soviet Army Studies Office
U.S. Army Combined Arms Center
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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THE NAVY AND COMBINED OPERATIONS: A CENTURY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE, 1853-1945

The basic thesis of this essay is that the joint navy-army combat actions in seas adjacent to and upon the lakes and rivers within Russian and Soviet continental theaters of military actions have had a persistent importance to the development of Russian/Soviet naval art and provide a fundamental continuity between naval art as practiced by the tsarist navy and that practiced by the Soviet Navy during the period in question. While the nature of such combined operations [sovmestnye operatsii] have evolved with the industrialization of warfare, they have not lost their relevance from the Russian/Soviet perspective even today.¹

INTRODUCTION

No greater authority than Peter the Great, the founder of Russia's new model army and its navy, need be cited to make this point. It was Peter in his Naval Regulations who observed that "a potentate with only an army has but one arm but he with an army and a navy has both."² From a Russian geo-strategic perspective these two arms could be employed most effectively when they acted

¹ L. I. Ol'shtynsky, Vzaimodeistvie armii i flota (Po opytu osnovnykh sovmestnykh nastupatel'nykh operatsii vtoroi mirovoi voyny) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1983), p. 3.

² P. I. Belavenets, Znachenie flota v istorii Rossii 2nd Edition, (Petrograd: Izdatel'stvo "Iakor'," 1914), p. 79.

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in concert in a given theater of military actions during a given campaign. This implied a mutual connection between the actions of the army and naval units involved and some level of mutual-support and interaction [vzaimodeistvie] which provides a unified leadership towards a single goal.³

In his campaigns from the Second Azov Expedition down to the end of the Northern War the tsar demonstrated a profound ability to employ his army and navy in such ways so that the "two arms" might best be utilized tactically to achieve decisive results. Indeed, under Peter there emerged an interest in and attention to coastal and green-water forces, which provided the organic tie between the sailing fleet of the line, on one hand, which contested for command of the sea in the Baltic and the army during its advance in the Baltic provinces and Finland. Peter's galley fleet was a force configured to provide such linkage between naval and ground forces conducting campaigns on the maritime flank of a continental theater of military action. Admiral Aprakhsin's adroit utilization of all three forces (232 galleys, 27 ships-of-the-line and 26,000 troops) made it possible for Russia to project power even unto the shores of Sweden itself in 1719.⁴

³ R. Golosov, V. Iasenovenko, and V. Koriavko, "K voprosu o kategorii vzaimodeistviia," Morskoi sbornik, No. 4 (April 1987), pp. 21-22.

⁴ F. Veselago, Kratkaia istoriia russkogo flota (s nachala moreplavaniia do 1825 goda 2nd Edition, (Moscow: Voenno-morskoe Izdatel'stvo NKVMF SSSR, 1939), pp. 26-35; and Jacob W. Kipp, "Peter the Great and the Birth of the Russian Navy," International Commission of Military History Acta No. 7

Russian naval history during the age of sail is replete with episodic examples of joint operations in the White Sea, Gulf of Finland, Baltic, Mediterranean, Adriatic, Aegean and Black Sea, and Pacific theaters, where design or necessity demanded close collaboration between the navy and army. Combat in each theater tended to take place most often in coastal waters and in support of Russian advances along the adjoining coast or while naval forces were protecting the maritime flank of their own army or their base of operations. In a few cases when the diplomatic constellation permitted the deployment of a naval squadron in the Mediterranean strategic cooperation developed in the form of two mutually supporting efforts by that squadron and Russian army and naval forces operating in the Balkans and the Black Sea.³

The degree of success in such joint actions depended in great measure upon a number of factors, including the leadership skills of the army and navy commanders in charge of action within the theater, the organization of the combined actions of their forces, the integration of the operational plan, and their level of experience in conducting such actions. Because of the locale, the threat, and the forces available Black Sea and Mediterranean naval commanders, especially Admirals Ushakov, Seniavin, Greig,

(Washington, D. C., 25-30 July 1982) (Manhattan, Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1984), pp. 113-139.

³ F. F. Veselago, Kratkiiia svedeniia o morskikh srazheniiakh za dva stoletiiia s 1656 po 1856 god (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi Akademii Nauk, 1871). This volume which combines a listing of naval engagements and an atlas of their locations by theaters underscores the importance of joint operations in each of these theaters.

Lazarev and Kornilov, proved particularly adept at such cooperation. These talented commanders were, however, aware of the dangers to naval professionalism to be found in a fleet tied to Russia's coasts in times of peace and war. They supported the notion that long-range cruises were the best method of developing the skills and attitudes necessary for effective command.⁶

COMBINED ACTIONS AND THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF WARFARE

With the dawning of the age of steam and steel such combat became more regular and sustained and was the topic of war planning by the Army's General Staff and the various naval fleet staffs and the Main Naval Staff as the history of naval operations during the Crimean, Russo-Turkish, and Russo-Japanese Wars makes clear.⁷ As the industrialization of war at sea radically reshaped the particulars of naval tactics, the character of the cooperation between naval and ground forces in each theater changed. In both the Crimean and Russo-Turkish Wars ad hoc staff arrangements worked out after the start of hostilities proved adequate. In both cases it can be argued that

⁶ Jacob W. Kipp, "Russian Naval Reforms and Imperial Expansion," Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual, 1 (1977), pp. 118-139.

⁷ B. I. Zverev, "Russkii Chernomorskii flot v Krymskoi voine 1853-1856 gg." unpublished candidate's dissertation, (Moscow: Institut Istorii, Akademiia Nauk SSSR, 1954); I. I. Arens, Rol' flota v voine 1877-1878 gg. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Morskogo Ministerstva, 1903); I. I. Rostunov, ed., Russko-turetskaia voina 1877-1878 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1977); I. I. Rostunov, Istoriia russko-iaponskoi voiny 1904-1905 gg. (Moscow: Nauka, 1977).

Russia's strategic situation handicapped execution by forcing her naval forces to operate in a context where the very limited resources of the Black Sea Fleet had to confront the real or threatened intervention of powerful maritime powers with naval forces far more numerous and modern than those which Russia could deploy in theater.⁸ In the face of difficult circumstances Russian naval forces in both wars demonstrated an ability to improvise to meet theater requirements, whether denying the Turks the ability to reinforce their forces along the Caucasian frontier by destroying the covering fleet at Sinope or providing the core of the sea and land defenses of Sevastopol against Allied attacks. During the Russo-Turkish War Russian naval officers continued the tradition of innovation and improvisation against a Turkish fleet which had an overwhelming superiority at sea in ships and modern ironclads. The Russian naval officers proved highly competent in three key areas: combined operations along the Danube, in the passive defense of Russian ports and water ways, and in active defense by merchantmen converted into cruisers carrying mine-torpedo launches.⁹

⁸ A. Zaionchkovskii, "Sinopskoe srazhenie i chernomorskii flot osen'iu 1853 goda," Voennyi sbornik, No. 11 (November 1903), pp. 1-97; and E. Arens, "Rol' flota v voinu 1877-1878 gg.," Voennyi sbornik, No. 7 (July 1903), pp. 13-41.

⁹ Jacob W. Kipp, "Tsarist Politics and the Naval Ministry, 1876-1881: Balanced Fleet or Cruiser Navy," Canadian-American Slavic Studies 17, No. 2 (Summer 1983), pp. 151-179; and E. Arens, "Rol' flota v voinu 1877-1878 gg.," Voennyi sbornik, No. 8 (August 1912), pp. 12-46, and No. 9 (September 1912), pp. 1-24.

S. O. Makarov, who commanded the armed merchantman Velikii Kniaz' Konstantin in 1877-1878, is an excellent example of what such long-range cruises - Makarov served with Rear Admiral A. A. Popov's Pacific Squadron in the 1860s - was supposed to achieve regarding officer education, skills and initiative. Makarov played a leading role in developing one of the first such tactical forms for the employment of contact mines, spar-torpedoes, and self-propelled torpedoes. These tactical forms were incorporated into the Navy's plan for its role in the war with Turkey as the operational concepts of passive defense, active defense, river crossing operations, and the mine-artillery position. Such positions involved close cooperation between naval and ground forces and were employed as a means of denying an opponent access to a narrow body of water by providing for the combined action of mine fields, shore batteries, and surface ships to defend the barrier. The Russians had experimented with mines in the defense of Kronstadt during the Crimean War, were aggressive in their development of a mine warfare school in the 1870s and pursued both mine laying and torpedo attacks during the Russo-Turkish War to neutralize the Turkish Black Sea Fleet and Danubian flotilla.¹⁰

Following the Russo-Turkish War Makarov was appointed chief of the naval flotilla, which provided logistical support for

¹⁰ E. Arens, "Rol' flota v voynu 1877-1878," Voennyi sbornik, No. 7 (July 1903), pp. 13-41, No. 8 (August 1903), pp. 12-46, No. 9 (September 1903), pp. 1-25, and No. 10 (October 1903), pp. 1-26.

General M. D. Skobelev's expedition against the Tekintsy in Central Asia. Makarov's own combat experience with advanced weapons technology shaped his own developing views on naval tactics and naval architecture, both areas in which he made major contributions during his long and productive career.¹¹

The rapid development of naval technology following the Russo-Turkish War and the appearance of new types of combatants increased the complexity of combat at sea and required a much more integrated process of staff planning for the conduct of sustained combat. To some officers this situation required the development of a more integrated staff system similar to that of the Army's General Staff to plan and prepare for operations in the event of war. Such efforts were seen as a guarantee of more effective mutual-support and interaction [vzaimodiestvie] among the emerging combat arms of the fleet and the fleet, as a whole, with the ground forces. In 1888 Admiral I. F. Likhachev, one of a generation of reform-minded officers who had overseen the reconstruction of the Navy following the Crimean War, advocated the transformation of the Main Naval Staff into a Naval General Staff, which would assume all operational-strategic planning. Among these Likhachev included:

. . . complete knowledge of its own strength as well as its own weakness;" timely study and establishment of strategic

¹¹ S. O. Makarov, Rassuzhdeniia po voprosam morskoi taktiki (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1943). See also: N. Klado, S. O. Makarov i voennaia nauka (St. Petersburg, 1914).

plans for the conduct of war and military actions; the establishment of programs of cruises and maneuvers.¹²

While the need for such a staff system for planning and combat preparation was clear to reform-minded officers, the Naval Ministry during a period of stagnation and decline steadfastly refused to address the issue.

More progress had, however, been made in the area of professional education for senior naval officers. Vice Admiral Makarov for one applauded the efforts of Admiral N. M. Chikhachov, the Director of the Naval Ministry, to establish a special class devoted to topics in naval science for commanders and senior lieutenants at the Nikolaev Naval Academy in 1895. In 1902 the Nikolaev Naval Academy hosted a strategic naval war game based upon the scenario of a surprise amphibious assault by the Black Sea Fleet and units of the Odessa Military District upon the Bosphorus and the subsequent creation of a powerful mine-fleet-artillery position to counter the intervention of the Royal Navy's Mediterranean Squadron. This war game, which was run by Lieutenant Colonel N. L. Klado, revealed a number of critical problems in naval planning. In their report the game's umpires recommended the creation of an operations section in the Main Naval Staff "to draw up plans of campaigns, programs for shipbuilding, maneuvers, and deployments of naval forces." This operations section was to work closely with the operations section of the Main Staff and the operations sections of each

¹² "Sluzhba General'nogo shtaba vo flote," Russkoe sudokhodstvo, No 24, (1888), pp. 12-15.

fleet's staff. The umpires proposed that all such operations sections be staffed with graduates from the Nikolaev Naval Academy, officers who would possess the necessary knowledge of "strategy, tactics, and the history of naval wars." The model officer was supposed to study "the naval sciences" in the same manner that students of the Nikolaev Academy of the General Staff addressed military science.¹³

For Makarov the explicit model for such a program was the U. S. Naval War College, which had been founded in 1884.¹⁴ In 1902 the Nikolaevskaia Naval Academy conducted a strategic war game under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel N. L. Klado of the Academy's faculty. The scenario called for a surprise Russian amphibious assault upon the Bosphorus by the Black Sea Fleet and army units from the Odessa military district against Anglo-Turkish defenders. One of the critical weaknesses which the umpires identified in their post-game assessment was the absence of a mechanism for strategic planning. They recommended as a solution "to create in the Main Naval Staff an operations section, which would work out plans of campaigns, programs of shipbuilding, maneuvers and deployments of naval forces." This operations section was to be closely tied with the operations sections of the various fleet staffs and were to serve on the

¹³ Russia, Nikolaevskaia Morskaia Akademiia, Voennno-morskaia strategicheskaia igra 1902 g. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Morskogo Ministerstva, 1902), pp. 31-47, 104-105.

¹⁴ S. O. Makarov, Razsuzhdeniia po voprosam morskoi taktiki (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Morskogo Ministerstva, 1897), pp. 4-5.

staffs of naval expeditions. Such operations sections were to be manned by naval general staff officers, educated along the lines of the Nikolaev Academy of the General Staff.¹⁵ Just prior to the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War the Main Naval Staff, which was an administrative organ of the Ministry, did get a "strategic unit," staffed by twelve officers. However, this unit was only in the process of formation when war began and so had no influence on the conduct of naval operations in the Far East.¹⁶

Admiral Makarov's own speculations on naval tactics during this period underscored the author's emphasis upon the interconnections between naval professionalism and technological innovation. First, he did not accept the idea that professional education could be left to on-the-job training as had traditionally been the case. Commanders could no longer rely upon eye-ball estimates and common sense. Instead, Makarov recommended intensive professional study of the new technologies and mastery of the art of employing them, a broad familiarity with writings in military and naval sciences, and a systematic study of military history in order to understand the complexity of war and to aid the commander in his most difficult decisions. He was fundamentally hostile to those who sought to find cook book

¹⁵ Russia, Nikolaevskaia Morskaia Akademiia, Voenno-morskaia strategicheskaiia igra 1902 g. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Morskogo Ministerstva, 1902), pp. 31-47, 104-105.

¹⁶ A. Stal', Sluzhba shtaba morskikh sil (Leningrad, 1928), pp. 31-32. See also: L. G. Beskrovnyi, Armiia i flot Rossii v nachale XX v.: Ocherki voenno-ekonomicheskogo potentsiala (Moscow: Nauka, 1986), pp. 220-221.

solutions, based upon historical cases. In this regard he had grave doubts about the primacy given to command of the sea as the first principle of naval strategy in Mahan and Colomb. At one point he flatly stated: "I personally am not an advocate of slavish adherence to principles." He criticized both Mahan and Colomb for drawing strategic conclusions about the primacy of the struggle for command of the sea on the basis of the experiences of sailing fleets. He warned: " . . . their conclusions, which are based on examples from the age of sail, should not be taken as unconditionally true in our era of machines and electricity."¹⁷

Makarov's analysis of naval operations during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) focused directly on the relationship between command of the sea and the demands of mutual-interaction and support [vzaimodeistvie] as conditioned by the new technology of war. He fully supported Admiral Ito's decision to commit his fleet to the protection of the maritime flank of the Japanese Army as deployed in theater and moved from Korea into Manchuria. The deployment of the Chinese Fleet into the ports of northern and southern China and the inability of Japanese naval forces to maintain a close blockade precluded effective execution of a national strategy tied to the immediate seizure of command of the sea. The priority of the theater support mission for Japanese

¹⁷ S. O. Makarov, "Rassuzhdeniia po voprosam morskoi taktiki," in: L. G. Beskrovnyi, ed., Russkaia voenno-teoreticheskaia mysl' XIX i nachala XX vekov (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1960), p. 409.

strategy hinged upon the protection of their operation line, connecting their supply bases with the campaign's objective, Port Arthur. Furthermore, the limitations of his own forces, which precluded a close blockade of all Chinese ports, and the vulnerability of his heavy forces in any close blockade to torpedo attacks Chinese naval deployments dictated a mutually-interacting and supporting role for the navy. When the Chinese Navy did mount a major threat to the Japanese sea lines of communication Ito destroyed that force in the Battle of the Yalu. He continued in his covering mission until Field Marshal Yamagata's army took Port Arthur. Then Ito employed his naval forces to protect an amphibious force to the second naval base in the north, where Chinese naval forces had concentrated. In this case, the Japanese threatened the base from the land side while Ito's fleet attacked the Chinese warships with gun fire and torpedo attacks until the squadron and forts surrendered.¹⁵

In spite of Makarov's insights regarding the effectiveness of integrated war plans in such maritime theaters of war, little progress had been made towards such an integrated effort in any potential theater of war on the eve of the Russo-Japanese War. Now it was the Russian Army and Navy which would have to defend Port Arthur from the Japanese. In 1897 Nicholas II confirmed the Naval Ministry's recommendation to deploy major naval forces from the Baltic Fleet to the Far East. The Main Naval Staff debated the thorny problem of concentrating Russian naval power under

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 408-409.

various contingencies: war in the Baltic with a powerful German Navy, war over the Eastern Question, and war with Japan in the Far East. Unable to build and sustain a fleet in the Far East, the Main Naval Staff sought a quick fix in the deployment of further forces to the Far East.¹⁹

Operational planning, however, was still in the hands of the commanders of the various fleets, squadrons, and flotillas. The command and staff system of the First Pacific Squadron at Port Arthur proved both inflexible and ineffective in moving from a peacetime to wartime footing in spite considerable intelligence that war was imminent. The Viceroy did not even think it necessary to inform the squadron commander, Vice Admiral O. V. Stark, or its Chief of Staff, Rear Admiral V. K. Vittgeft, of the fact that the Japanese Government had broken off diplomatic relations. Thus, Admiral Togo's light forces were able to achieve tactical surprise in their attack upon the First Pacific Squadron as it stood in the outer harbor of Port Arthur. This initial torpedo attack under cover of darkness (three hits out of sixteen launched) damaged the battleships Retvizan and Tsarevich and the cruiser Pallada. This attack did not cripple the squadron. Togo had, however, with one blow reduced the First Pacific Squadron's immediate ability to contest for operational command of the sea in the theater. The Japanese success had an immediate effect on Vice Admiral Stark's handling of his forces on the next day when

¹⁹ M. Petrov, "Zadachi i plany russkogo flota v period, predshestvovavshii mirovoi voine (1880-1914): Po arkhivnym materialam," Morskoi sbornik, No. 8, (August 1925), pp. 19-30.

he fought an indecisive action with Togo's battle fleet outside Port Arthur. Vice Admiral Stark's inability to break the Japanese blockade or seize back the initiative at sea from Admiral Togo undermined the squadron's confidence in its commanders and itself.²⁰

Vice Admiral S. O. Makarov shortly replaced Stark but commanded Russia's Pacific Squadron for less than a month before his death aboard the Petropavlovsk. In that short time, however, Makarov had a profound impact upon the squadron and left a legacy, upon which Russian naval reformers built after the war. One of his first steps was to improvise his own staff to coordinate naval operations, and he included in it a representative of the Russian General Staff to provide coordination with the Army at Port Arthur.²¹ Even while on his way to the Far East to his new command Makarov looked to means to reinforce his squadron by ordering the disassembly and dispatch by rail of small torpedo boats [minonostsy] of the Cyclone class to Port Arthur, where they might be assembled. Makarov's approach to naval combat emphasized the role of the fleet in providing an active defense for Port Arthur, which included sorties against the Japanese blockading force. If an amphibious landing should threaten he proposed to deploy his squadron against it, and he also pursued an aggressive program of counter mining. Makarov

²⁰ I. I. Rustonuv, ed., Istoriia russko-iaponskoi voiny 1904-1905 gg. (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), pp. 110-125.

²¹ Rostunov, Istoriia russko-iaponskoi voiny 1904-1905 gg., pp. 125-144.

asked to have several hundred copies of his book on naval tactics sent out to the squadron so that his fellow officers might better understand his tactical conceptions and so grasp his overall operational plan. He was also very much interested in the employment of Popov's radio-telegraph for communications among vessels at sea and with their ports. Makarov hoped to draw the Japanese battle fleet into combat before Port Arthur, where the fortifications heavy artillery might support his squadron. Following Makarov's death no Russian naval commander in the theater had the skill or initiative to counter Admiral Togo and his fleet.²²

Vice Admiral Z. P. Rozhestvensky, who commanded the 2nd Pacific Squadron on its long voyage to the Far East and disaster at Tsu Shima, improvised his own staff prior to the squadron's departure to the Far East.²³ Among the members of that staff - men who knew the severe combat limitations under which that hodge-podge force would have to face Togo's battle fleet - there were grave doubts about their own ability to direct the squadron in combat. As one of the Admiral's staff observed during the voyage:

At last I find myself at the very heart of that force which

²² A. I. Dubravin, "Vitse-admiral Stepan Osipovich Makarov," in; A. I. Dubravin, ed., Deiatel'nost' vitse-admirala S. O. Makarova v sudostroenii (Leningrad: Sudostroenie, 1977), pp. 37-41.

²³ Beskrovnyi, Armia i flot Rossii v nachale XX v., p. 221.

is supposed to save the nation's honor at sea, and I have no faith in it. What is to be done?²⁴

In their turn, officers of the Main Naval Staff were critical of the manner in which the Naval Ministry had approach the problems of organizing the squadron, determining its composition, and, finally, deciding upon sending it around the world without any operational design. They were critical of the Captain 2nd Rank N. L. Klado's use of the media to promote the dispatch of both the oceanic capital ships and the coastal defense ironclads to the Far East, lamented the lack of leadership within the Naval Ministry, but sympathized with Admiral Rozhdestvensky's stoic acceptance of an impossible task.²⁵ The fall of Port Arthur and the subsequent destruction of the 2nd Pacific Squadron set the stage for naval reform and reconstruction in the postwar period.

NAVAL REFORM AND VZAIMODEISTVIE, 1906-1917

Following the Russo-Japanese War naval planners had to confront a host of problems which defeat and destruction had revealed. The losses in ships and materials crippled the naval

²⁴ E. V. Sventorzhetsky, "Do Tsushimy," Krasnyi arkhiv, No. 67 (1934), p. 199.

²⁵ V. A. Shringer, "Podgotovka II eskadry k plavaniyu," in: G. K. Graf et al., S eskadroi Admirala Rozhdestvenskago: Sbornik statei, posviashchennykh dvadtsatipiatiletiyu pokhoda II-i eskadry tikhago okeana (Prague: Izdanie Vladimira Kolesnikova, 1930), pp. 27-59. On Klado's strategic vision and his debt to Mahan see: N. L. Klado (Priboi), Posle ukhoda vtoroi eskadry tikhago okeana (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia A. S. Suvorina, 1905), pp. 10 ff.

defenses in both the Baltic and Far East.²⁶ One of the areas of reform, which naval officers deemed critical, was strategic and operational planning. In April 1906 the Navy got its own Naval General Staff. Initially the staff was quite small -- 24 officers, five senior NCOs, and 15 enlistedmen -- and had six sections: three were operational and addressed the Baltic, Black Sea and Far Eastern theaters. The other three were statistical, historical, and organizational-technical. The Naval General Staff concentrated in its hands operational planning, the Navy's shipbuilding program, naval exercises and maneuvers, and the collection of naval intelligence.²⁷

The emergence of new weapons systems and the improvement of older ones encouraged radical changes in naval tactics and forced naval officers to address the problem of sustained combat actions over larger areas, encompassing various types of weapons systems. These innovations included the submarine, self-propelled torpedo, wireless telegraph, and the airplane. During World War I four additional sections dealing with submarines, aviation, signal communications and intelligence, and rear services were added.²⁸

In 1906 the Naval General Staff and the General Staff of the

²⁶ K. F. Shatsillo, "O disproportsii v razvitii vooruzhennykh sil Rossii nakanune pervoi mirovoi voiny (1906-1914 gg.)," Istoricheskie zapiski, 63 (1969), p. 124.

²⁷ Beskrovnyi, Armia i flot Rossii v nachale XX v., pp. 221-222.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 222; and S. O. Zakharov, ed., Istoriia voenno-morskogo iskusstva (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1969), p. 134.

Army embarked on joint planning for army and navy cooperation in three theaters: Gulf of Finland and Baltic, Black Sea and Far East. In each case the two agencies agreed upon the major threat in theater and outlined the role of naval forces in a future conflict.²⁹ What is particularly noteworthy about this document is the fact that the overwhelming threat of German naval power in the Baltic and the absence of effective naval forces in the Far East underscored close army-navy cooperation in those two theaters for the immediate future. In the Black Sea, however, a juncture of imperialist ambitions and the ideology of the new navalism gave rise to an aggressive program of naval construction and political ambitions, which aimed at securing for Russia control of the Straits. Initially, the Naval General Staff sought leverage in the Mediterranean by building up the capital ships of the Baltic Fleet with the idea of maintaining a portion of that force in the Mediterranean for presence and suasion. However, after repeated Balkan crises, increased military German influence in Turkey, and the decision of the Turkish government to expand its own naval forces, the Naval Minister in 1910 recommended and the tsarist government confirmed a major naval build-up in the Black Sea.³⁰

²⁹ K. F. Shatsillo, Russkii imperializm i razvitie flota (Moscow: Nauka, 1968), pp. 318-321.

³⁰ K. F. Shatsillo, Russkii imperializm i razvitie flota (Moscow: Nauka, 1968), pp. 318-321 and "Razvitie chernomorskogo flota nakanune pervoi mirovoi voiny (1907-1914 gg)," Istoricheskie zapiski, 75 (1965), pp. 86-121. For an excellent assessment of Russian naval involvement in the Mediterranean and its association with imperial expansion and navalism in the two

In the decade separating the Russo-Japanese War and 1914 Russian naval planners addressed the problem of naval reconstruction and expansion. Their naval construction programs of 1908 and 1912 caused serious conflict within the tsarist government, pitting the War Ministry, its General Staff, and the Ministry of Finance against the Naval Ministry in a contest for scarce resources. Naval officers justified their construction programs in ideological terms, shaped by the new navalism and linked with the Petrine vision of naval power and national development.³¹

Russia's naval planners, like their contemporaries elsewhere, fell into the trap of mistaking the potential power of the new generation of capital ships, i. e. the Dreadnoughts, for actual combat power and so created a navy which was radically out of balance between its potential combat power and its real combat power in the various theaters. They justified a navy that could compete with those of England and Germany on the grounds that such a force would provide deterrence, a Russian echo of Admiral Tirpitz's "risk theory," and political incentives for other powers to make alliances with Russia. This was the line of argument offered by A. P. Shcheglov, one of the founders of the

decades before 1906 see: Dieter Matthei, Die Russische Marine im Mittelmeer im Bildfeld Deutscher Seeinteressen Unpublished doctoral dissertation, (Bonn: Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms Universitaet, 1983).

³¹ E. N. Kvashin-Samarin, Morskaia ideia v russkoi zemle (St. Petersburg: Izdanie Morskogo General'nogo Shtaba, 1912), pp. 178-189.

Naval General Staff.³² Such arguments were silent about the role of such forces when deterrence failed.

Furthermore, in presenting their claims upon the treasury for scarce resources the naval advocates competed for funds which the Army desperately needed for its own modernization. In a heated competition for funds both War Minister Sukhomlinov and the Chief of Main Directorate of the General Staff, Lieutenant General A. Z. Myshlaevsky criticized both the pace and extent of the shipbuilding program. Myshlaevsky warned: "The history of Russia teaches us that the fleet plays an auxiliary role in relation to the land army."³³

After 1912 Russia was in the curious position of funding massive modernization of both its army and navy, creating alarm in the capitals of central and eastern Europe and facing a window of vulnerability before these programs brought about the restructuring of the military balance on the continent, which thoughtful Russian officers understood had to be their outcome.³⁴

In March 1914, on the eve of hostilities, the Naval Minister and Chief of the Naval General Staff had to admit that in spite of the long-term benefits of the naval construction programs it would be impossible for the next few years to count upon an

³² Shatsillo, "O disproportsii v razvitii vooruzhennykh sil Rossii nakanune pervoi mirovoi voiny," Istoricheskie zapiski 83 (1969), p.128.

³³ Ibid., p. 132.

³⁴ A. Svechin, "Bol'shaia voennaia programma," Russkaia mysl', 34, No. 8 (August 1913), pp. 19-29.

effective battle squadron to contest for command of the sea in the Baltic.³⁵ Thus, the lack of time for completion of the construction programs, delays caused by reduced funding and the priority given to capital ships over light forces and auxiliaries meant that Russian naval forces were not "balanced" at the start of hostilities. In this case balance refers not to a mechanical relationship expressed by the number of ships in each class but to the correlation of available naval forces to the immediate missions which stood before the Baltic Fleet.³⁶

The Naval General Staff, which had proven itself a powerful means of stimulating naval development over the preceding decade, did not, however, provide strategic-operational leadership for the Navy once hostilities began. Several crucial factors in the postwar period combined to reduce its role. While charged with drafting war plans for employment of the fleets in case of hostilities, the Naval General Staff did not have a role in operational execution because of the dominant assumption that a general European war would be a short one. Second, as a result of serious command and control problems in the Far East and the need to provide coordinated leadership in a vast theater of military

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 351-356.

³⁶ In spite of the fact that mine laying was critical to the defense of the Baltic Coast and the Gulf of Finland, the Baltic Fleet had only six mine layers in 1914. Only two, the Enisei and Amur, had been built since 1905. Three others were converted ironclads built in the 1860s and 1870s. See: Russia, Morskoe Ministerstvo, Sudovoi spisok Rossiiskago Imperatorskago flota 1914 g. (St. Petersburg: Izdanie Morskogo General'nago Shtaba. 1914), pp. 136-143.

actions the Russian General Staff had promoted a series of reforms culminating in the creation of the post of Commander-in-Chief, as "the highest commander of all the land and naval armed forces designated for military actions" and unified Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief (Stavka) to coordinate all military operations.³⁷ Below the Stavka the intermediary level of command to coordinate the actions of a group of armies on a single axis within the theater was the (front). This new command arrangement raised the problem of where the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets would fit into the structure of the high command.

The weakness of Russian naval forces in the Baltic precluded decisive, independent, strategic-operational actions by that fleet. With the start of hostilities, to the surprise of its commander, Vice Admiral N. O. Essen, the Baltic Fleet came under the operational direction of the commander of the 6th Army.³⁸ Only the day before the German declaration of war the Naval General Staff had initiated the creation of a naval directorate, headed by Captain 2nd Rank V. M. Al'tfater, the former chief of the Operations Section of the Naval General Staff, within the staff of the Sixth Army. Al'tfater found both the army commander

³⁷ I. I. Rostunov, Russkii front pervoi mirovoi voiny (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), pp. 113-115.

³⁸ Beskrovnyi, Armiia i flot v nachale XX v., p. 222. See also: N. V. Pavlovich, ed., Flot v pervoi mirovoi voine (Moscow: Veonizdat, 1964), I, pp. 35-45.

and his staff quite unprepared to undertake the direction of joint army-navy operations.³⁹

At the same time the Black Sea Fleet was subordinated directly to the Headquarters (Stavka) of the Supreme Commander, which had its own Naval Directorate under the command of Rear Admiral D. V. Neniukov, the former Deputy Chief of the Naval General Staff. The creation of such naval directorates, while necessary for operational coordination, took experienced officers away from the Naval General Staff and so weakened its ability to provide leadership and coordination.⁴⁰

In 1915 as a result of the deterioration of the situation along the Eastern Front it became evident that the subordination of the Baltic Fleet to the 6th Army did not provide for an effective defense of the coast. In response to this situation Stavka created a Northern Front and a Naval Directorate within it and subordinated the Baltic Fleet to that front.⁴¹ This arrangement did not, however, resolve the problem of army-navy cooperation in that theater. The Commander of Baltic Fleet, who saw his own role as that of Commander-in-Chief of a Baltic theater of naval operations, sought to have his own forces

³⁹ V. Simonenko, "Organy upravleniia russkogo flota v pervuiu mirovuiu voinu," Voenno-isoricheskii zhurnal, No. 9, (September 1975), p. 104.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 104.

⁴¹ V. Simonenko, "Organy upravleniia russkogo flota v pervuiu mirovuiu voinu," Voenno-isotricheskii zhurnal, No. 9 (September 1975), pp. .

placed directly under Stavka as was the case with the Black Sea Fleet. This situation came to a head in January 1916, when Stavka created its own Naval Staff to coordinate the actions of both the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets and to guarantee cooperation between naval and ground forces in both theaters. The Naval General Staff was left with no operational-strategic role but concerned itself with the direction of the Caspian, Siberian, and Northern Flotillas.¹²

As Soviet authors have pointed out, the very nature of combat operations during the war placed severe strains upon these command and control arrangements with regard to the conduct of independent and joint operations.

The most typical combat actions at sea were: destruction of enemy warships, amphibious landings, joint actions on the maritime flank of forces, disruption and defense of sea lines of communications, blockading activities, and mine laying. In those cases when combat actions at sea had operational objectives they grew into naval operations.

The appearance of naval operations in the First World War was conditioned by the quantitative and qualitative changes of the fleet. With the appearance of operations the necessity of working out a special theory of operational art was created. This theory was first created after the First World War.¹³

While the term "operational art" to describe such an intermediary level between tactics and strategy was not coined until the 1920s, problems associated with the command and control of independent and joint operations on both maritime flanks of

¹² Beskrovnyi, Armiia i flot v nachale XX v., pp. 222-223.

¹³ S. E. Zakharov, ed, Istoriia voenno-morskogo iskusstva (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1969), p. 133.

the Eastern Front during World War I provided the most fertile ground for the development of naval interest in operations. This was particularly true of the Black Sea, where the correlation of forces in the theater permitted "naval operations against the shore."⁴⁴

The series of events leading up to Turkey's entry into World War in October 1914, including the arrival of the German battle cruiser Goeben and the cruiser Breslau in theater, added complications to the Black Sea Fleet's war plans. As in the case of the Russo-Japanese War, the enemy seized the initiative at the start of hostilities. Enemy naval forces bombarded Sevastopol, attacked Odessa with torpedo boats, and sank the minelayer Prut but proved unable to inflict a crippling blow upon the Black Sea Fleet.⁴⁵

The Black Sea Fleet's responses to war with Turkey were shaped by the nature of the theater, the correlation of force in it, and the constraints which coal and oil imposed upon naval forces. Russian capital ships were coal-fired and when operating from Sevastopol did not have the ability to maintain a sustained presence at the Bosphorus to support either a close blockade or a major amphibious assault. Russia's newest destroyers, however, were oil fired and needed the fuel from Baku, which could reach them through the Caucasian port of Batumi. This situation had

⁴⁴ N. Novikov, Operatsii flota protiv berega na chernom more v 1914-1917 gg. 3rd Edition (Leningrad: Gosvoenizdat, 1937), p. 3.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 3-36.

unforeseen consequences for naval operations in the Black Sea.

Independent naval operations took the form of a series of sorties, designed to cut Constantinople off from the coal fields of Anatolia. In the course of three years of war the fleet carried out five bombardments with capital ships, 20 attacks with light forces, one attempt to close the port of Zunguldak by sinking block ships at its entrance and several attacks by fleet hydroplanes. In addition, the fleet later engaged in aggressive mining operations at the entrance of the Bosphorus and at other points along the sea lines of communication linking Constantinople and the coal fields. Destroyers, torpedo boats, and submarines carried out frequent raids, sinking merchantmen in the area. However, the campaign was not a sustained effort, and in the interval between each such effort shipments of coal resumed.⁴⁶ The fleet did carry out demonstrations off the Bosphorus in support of the Allied assaults upon the Dardanelles but achieved very little.

Although there were repeated proposals from Stavka for joint operations against the Bosphorus in the form of an amphibious assault and against the Anatolian coal fields by amphibious raid to wreck the ports and mine shafts, none of these efforts were undertaken. Only after the appointment of Vice Admiral A. V. Kolchak as CinC Black Sea Fleet in late 1916 did preliminary planning for a Bosphorus landing begin, but the February Revolution of 1917 and the deterioration of the fleet's combat

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 37-88.

power precluded such an effort. Unforeseen developments in joint operations along the Transcaucasian coastline of the Black Sea had set the stage for such planning.

In the Caucasian theater of military actions, in spite of the fact that little thought had been given to joint army-navy operations in the pre-war period, the need for cooperation in defense of Batumi drew the commands of the Caucasian Army and the fleet into cooperation. Once hostilities began both naval and army commands recognized the need for cooperation and the development of Batumi as a base of operations. From this forward base the Black sea Fleet could strike most effectively against the Anatolian coast. The fleet dispatched a light squadron and a battalion of naval infantry to strengthen the port's land defenses. However, since the Fleet and the Caucasian Army both answered directly to Stavka, neither could impose its operational conceptions upon the other. Most of 1915 was taken up with stabilizing the defense, countering Turkish naval bombardments, and working out effective means of cooperation when the Caucasian Army had the opportunity to go over to the offensive on its maritime flank. This, in turn, depended upon the successful completion of its operation against the Turkish fortress at Erzurum.⁴⁷

In early 1916 the Black Sea Fleet reinforced its Batumi Detachment (Captain 1st Rank M. M. Rimsky-Korsakov, commander) with the battleship Rostislav, two gunboats, and two destroyers

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 105-126.

with orders to carry out a series of bombardments in support of the Caucasian Army's Coastal Detachment (15,000 men). These efforts proved quite successful, and the Turkish defense was thrown back in this sector in disarray. Thanks to the lessons learned in the first bombardment, Army-Fleet cooperation improved substantial during the next bombardment of the Turkish position at the River Abu-Vitse. Shore-based artillery spotters with the coastal detachment provided excellent fire correction, and with its help the ship's heavy guns proved very effective in a counter-battery role. On February 16, 1916, the battleship Rostislav, using its 75 mm, 152 mm and 254 mm guns, smashed the Turkish trenches and strong points near the village of Iani-Ker. The destruction of that section of the line and the simultaneous flank attack by the detachment's forces on the Turkish right flank broke the defense. Russian ground forces went over to the pursuit but met no organized resistance for several days.⁴⁵

These successes in joint operations stimulated much greater interest in the use of naval forces on the Turkish flank. General V. N. Liakhov, commander of the Coastal Detachment, advocated the employment of naval forces for tactical amphibious landings in the rear of the Turkish defense. Liakhov proposed to land 2100 men and two mountain howitzers with horses after a powerful preliminary bombardment of the Turkish position.

To transport the troops the Black Sea Fleet chose to use the El'pidifor class grain transports because of its shallow draft,

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 127-147.

maneuverability, and cargo space. Some of these vessels had been mobilized as fleet transports for coastal waters, and now they were pressed into service to transport the landing force from Batumi and land the force at sun rise. Minesweepers and destroyers escorted the transports on the voyage. Finally reconnaissance of the landing site at Atina on the coast of Lazistan was carried out on February 20/March 4, 1916, with senior army and naval commanders taking part. The landing on the morning of the next day took the Turkish troops by complete surprise. Panic ensued among the defenders, and when the Coastal Detachment began its advance it found no organized resistance facing it. Such flanking attacks were repeated five times during the advance across Lazistan between February and April 1916.⁴⁹

The threat of Turkish reinforcements to its army in Turkish Armenia gave rise on the Russian side to consideration of ways of slowing down or stopping the arrival of such forces. The Black Sea Fleet command proposed a major operational amphibious landing against Trebizond. While the Caucasian Army under General N. N. Iudenich supported such an operation, Stavka had major reservations. Most of these concerned the allocation of ground forces from other theaters to provide the landing force. When reserves did become available and after the successful tactical landings in Lazistan, Stavka did agree to some sort of joint operation against Trebizond. However, details of the operational plan were to be worked out by the staffs of the Front and Fleet.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 148-161.

Once again there was no initial agreement. General Liakhov of the Coastal Detachment proposed three successive operations, each employing tactical landings. Vice Admiral Eberhardt, CinC Black Sea Fleet, criticized this proposal on the grounds that a succession of tactical blows would invite a Turkish counter stroke. Instead, he proposed one short, decisive blow.⁵⁰

In February the Caucasian Army took the Turkish fortress at Erzurum and was now in a position to address the Turkish threat to its maritime flank. An agreement was reached between the Caucasian Front and the Black Sea Fleet later in the month, in which it appeared that the Fleet's conception of the amphibious operation had been accepted. But such did not occur. The initial tactical successes gained by the Batumi and Coastal Detachments drove the overall operational design. These successes raised the issue of providing reinforcements for the Coastal Detachment so that it could sustain its advance. This, in turn, raised the issue of the form and substance of army-navy operational cooperation.⁵¹

The first step in such operational cooperation, by common agreement, involved lifting two cossack infantry brigades (18,000 men) from Novorossiisk and landing them successfully at Rize. To protect the convoy (22 transports) from Odessa to Novorossiisk and then to Rize the Black Sea Fleet provided a covering force made up of two modern battleships, two cruisers, and six

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 163-179, 250-255.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 178-179.

destroyers. Direct convoy protection from enemy submarines and destroyers was provided by the convoy escort composed of cruisers, including two which had been converted into seaplane carriers, and destroyers.³²

Because of its scale and duration the Russian command did not expect to achieve surprise during this operation and had to adopt measures to counter anticipated efforts by Turkish surface ships and submarines to disrupt the operation. The initial lift of troops was, however, a success. Having completed the sea lift, the transport force and its direct escorts took up the task of landing the two brigades at Rize on March 25. While there were problems in this landing because of lack of training among the transport crews in amphibious landing techniques, the assault force went ashore quickly and in good order. When on the next day it became necessary to re-embark one of the brigades without its materiel and land it at Khamurkan to stop a Turkish attack, the Fleet was able to do that with dispatch.

The covering force, reinforced by the battleship Panteleev and a destroyer from Sevastopol, lent its fire to support the bombardment of Turkish positions along the Karadere River which covered the eastern approach to Trebizond. There its heavy guns, along with those of Rostislav, proved effective against the fortifications. Prior to the bombardment both capital ships had taken on liaison officers from the coastal detachment's artillery to provide coordination. Thanks to their maps and intelligence

³² Ibid., pp. 180-184.

regarding the Turkish positions, the ships' guns were able to conduct a systematic fire with correction provided by ship spotters and army spotters ashore via radio. The bombardment went on for two days.

Thanks to premature and uncoordinated attacks, the Russian ground forces suffered heavy casualties during the first day's fighting on April 1/14. However, the combination of shore and naval artillery and infantry assaults disrupted the enemy's defenses. Russian infantry penetrated the Turkish lines. Resistance broke on the second day. General Liakhov's forces were able to go over to a general pursuit. With the reinforcements provided by sea lift the Caucasian Army was able to renew its drive on Trebizond in cooperation with the Fleet. The city fell on April 5/18.

The Navy provided operational lift for two divisions (35,000 men) sent from the Sea of Azov to Trebizond to reinforce the defense and permit the transformation of the port into a secure forward supply base for the entire front.⁵³ At the same time the seizure of Trebizond denied the 3rd Turkish Army a secure, forward port linked to Constantinople. Finally, the light forces of the Black Sea Fleet were able to use Trebizond as a secure forward base to strike at Turkish Sea Lines of communications along the Anatolian coast.

These joint operations of the Black Sea Fleet and the Caucasian Army stimulated interest in similar amphibious landings

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 161-230.

in the Gulf of Riga. A force of three infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade (50,000 men) were concentrated in the Baltic ports, transports were dispatched to Reval, Helsinki, Riga, and the Islands of Moon Sound to lift the force, and the Russian squadron in the Gulf Riga made preparations to cover the invasion force, provide fire support to the landings, and block any effort by German naval units to intervene. However, this operation, which was planned for the August 1916, was never executed because developments in other sectors of the front, notably Rumania's entry into the war drew off the available forces.³⁴

The planning and execution of such joint amphibious operations had substantial importance for the development of Soviet joint operations because they provided case studies for examining the processes of Fleet-Front cooperation in operations, where Russian forces were able to seize and hold the initiative on land and sea and to bring both arms quickly and decisively to bear according to an operational design which linked a succession of tactical successes into a strategic-operational design. It was also important because it represented a case where Stavka served as an honest broker between two co-equals, i. e. the Black Sea Fleet and the Caucasian Army. Furthermore, the experience of joint operations in the theater suggested that the necessary skills needed for such cooperation could only be worked out over

³⁴ A. Gerua, Polchishcha (Sophia: Rossiisko-Bolgarskoe Kniznoizdatel'stvo, 1923), pp. 263-265.

time and with serious effort at mutual training and education regarding operational concepts.

SOVIET NAVAL POWER AND COMBINED ACTIONS

The Revolution of 1917 brought a deterioration of Russian naval capabilities and a radicalization of the Navy. Initial violence against officers in the Baltic Fleet created substantial distrust between officers and men. At the same time, however, the need to maintain some sort of defense of the Baltic coast to cover Petrograd did lead some naval officers into a cooperative arrangement with the Sailors' Committees and other revolutionary organs of power. This, in turn, set the stage for cooperation between some naval specialists and the new Bolshevik regime once it came to power and found that it had to confront the problem of creating a new military establishment and fight a Civil War. Among those officers was Honored Professor of the Naval Academy of the Fleet Major General N. L. Klado, who wrote one of the first texts on strategy, published by the Soviet government.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ N. L. Klado, Strategiia: Vvedenie (Petrograd: Tipografiia Morskago Ministerstva, 1918), pp. 1 ff. This volume is noteworthy on several grounds: First, Klado treats strategy and not naval strategy, implying that the general category shaped the subcategory. Second, the work was critical of dialectics in military science and cited a host of bourgeois thinkers and critics, who were both critics and enemies of the Bolsheviks, including P. N. Miliukov. Finally, Klado provides a capital guide to the relationship between military science and art and their application to strategy.

Although most of the Baltic Fleet was brought back to Petrograd in the spring of 1918, the Soviet Republic had little immediate use for such naval power. In the course of the Civil War the combat power of the Baltic Fleet steadily deteriorated. In the spring of 1918 part of the Black Sea Fleet was scuttled at Novorossiisk rather than let it fall into German hands after the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. What remained or was re-floated fell into the hands of the Germans, the Allies, and finally the Whites during the Civil War.⁵⁶

For the Bolsheviks one of the first problems was the creation of a new military establishment to replace the old one swept away by the revolution. Between December 1917 and February 1918 they disbanded the old army and navy and set about creating new executive agencies to manage military and naval affairs, replacing the War and Naval Ministries with the Peoples Commissariats for Military Affairs and for Naval Affairs. In the spring of 1918 they began active recruiting of former army and naval officers to serve as military specialists with the new Soviet forces, curtailed the komitetshchina which had so undermined order and discipline in the old army in 1917, and introduced the system of dual command by officers and commissars

⁵⁶ P. Stasevich, "Rechnye flotilii i morskoi flot v grazhdannskuiu voinu," in: A. S. Bubnov et al, eds., Grazhdannskaia voina 1918-1921 Moscow: Voennyi Vestnik, 1928), II, pp. 182-213.

to increase military effectiveness and guarantee political reliability.⁵⁷

With the start of the Civil War they set about creating a new command structure to replace that of the old Stavka. Lenin and his colleagues created a unified, centralized national command authority, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (RVSR), in September 1918 and the post of CinC of all the army and naval forces of the Republic.⁵⁸

In the field the Bolsheviks subordinated all military force in a given sector to the front commander responsible for the conduct of the war in that area. Thus, during the Civil War naval power took the form of 13 ad hoc sea, river and lake flotillas organized around available personnel and hulls and subordinated to the military councils of the fronts, where such forces fought. Soviet students of the role of naval forces in the Civil War, including P. Stasevich, who became editor of Morskoj sbornik, stress improvised and combined character of their actions. Among the eleven missions listed by Stasevich "struggle with the enemy fleet" came dead last, while fire support to ground forces in the attack and on the defense came first followed by actions against the flanks and rear of the enemy, transport of troops, amphibious landings, and breakthroughs of

⁵⁷ On the Navy and the Russian Revolutions see: Evan Mawdsley, The Russian Revolution and the Baltic Fleet: War and Politics, February 1917 - April 1918 (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978).

⁵⁸ B. I. Zverev, V. I. Lenin i flot (1918-1920) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1978), pp. 99-107.

the enemy front by advances along rivers. The Civil War on the rivers, lakes and seas was a war of small flotillas composed of riverine gunboats, armed cutters, mine layers, mine sweepers, shallow draught transports, light auxiliaries used to carry ammunition, supplies, and fuel, and hydroplane tenders used to support naval aviation in these actions.⁵⁹

In the course of the Civil War the quality of Red naval forces in the riverine war improved, as did the ability of the various front commands to exploit these forces. Front commanders who appreciated the value of army-navy cooperation often found the navy unable to hold up its end of the operation. Thus, in November 1920 when M. V. Frunze planned his final assault on Wrangel's forces in the Crimea he had initially planned two pincer blows against the Crimea -- one via Perekop Isthmus and the other via Chongar and the Arbat Needle. Frunze had planned the latter attack to come two days after the blow at Perekop. The success of the Chongar-Arbat attack hinged upon the ability of the Azov Flotilla to land forces in the rear of Wrangel's position via the Arbat Needle. However, because of ice at Taganrog the Azov Flotilla could not put to sea, and Frunze fell back upon a single blow, which combined a frontal pinning attack at Perekop and a very risky advance across the Sivash - a

⁵⁹ Stasevich, "Rechnye flotilii i morskoi flot v grazhdannskuiu voinu," in: Grazhdannskaia voina 1918-1921, II, pp. 185-187. See also: A. Sobelev, "Krasnyi flot v voine 1918-1921 gg.," Morskoi sbornik, No. 12, (December 1922), pp. 30-55, and A. Selianichev, "Boevye deistviia rechnykh i osernykh flotill v grazhdanskoi voine," Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 6, (June 1978), pp. 82-86.

coastal marsh separating the Crimea from Northern Tavrida on the Azov - to take the Perekop fortifications from the rear. He relied on favorable winds to keep the marshy waters of the Sivash fordable.⁶⁰

Thus, even in the final year of the Civil War the Red Navy was only able to contest for and gain command of the sea on the Caspian. The critical need to secure the shipment of oil from the Caucasian oil fields to Soviet Russia led to the decision by the RVSR to strengthen its Caspian Flotilla. In the spring of 1920 diplomatic shifts, i. e. Britain's withdrawal as a active supporter of the Whites and revolutionary events ashore, especially an uprising in Baku, forced the sizeable White flotilla to seek protection in the Iranian port Enzeli. That flotilla, although interred by the British garrison at Enzeli still constituted a "fleet in being" to threaten Baku and the Republic's oil supply. Therefore, the Red Navy was given the authority to undertake a raid against the port with the objective of seizing or destroying the enemy flotilla there. In spite of inadequate reconnaissance, uncertainties about the nature of the defenses, and inadequate time to organize a raid, the Volga-Caspian Flotilla was able to carry out a surprise tactical landing (2000 men) supported by naval gunfire. The first salvo from the ships' guns hit the British garrison headquarters and paralyzed the defense and prevented an organized defense against

⁶⁰ Direktivy Komandovaniia frontov Krasnoi Armii (1917-1922) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974), pp. 501-502, 505-506.

the landing. After two days of intermittent fighting and negotiations the British commander surrendered the port and the White Flotilla, thus ending any threat to the Republic's oil supply and giving the Soviet Navy command of the Caspian Sea.⁶¹ The Civil War thus provided young Soviet officers with a wealth of practical experience in combined operations with the Red Army.

INTER-WAR NAVAL THEORY AND COOPERATION

With the end of the Civil War and the suppression of the Kronstadt Mutiny in 1921 the fortunes of the Soviet Navy reached an all time low. The Soviet economy was in ruins, the nation's ship yards were in utter disorder, the remaining capital ships were little more than floating batteries, and the political reliability of the Navy was suspect. In this context the Communist Party and the Soviet state embarked upon Lenin's New Economic Policy with its concessions to the rival of trade and peasant agriculture. The national economic recovery depended upon the demobilization of the armed forces and their reorganization to provide a mix of forces, which would sustain a credible defense while not imposing a major strain upon an already over-taxed national economy. Hand in hand with demobilization went the process of military reform. For the Navy this meant a basic

⁶¹ N. Iu. Ozarovsky, "Enzeliiskaia operatsiia 18 Maia 1920 g.," Morskoi sbornik, No. 2, (February 1941), pp. 96-122, and I. S. Isakov, Izbrannye trudy: Okeanologiya, geografiia i voennaia istoriia (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1984), pp. 122-177.

reorganization at a time of demobilization and limited resources.⁶²

As Robert Herrick has pointed out, Soviet naval theory in the inter-war period developed around a sharp debate between two schools, the young and the old.⁶³ The Old School included those officers who supported the classical concept of sea power, which had guided the Naval General Staff in the prewar period. It included many of leading tsarist naval theorists and emphasized capital ships and independent missions for the navy. Many of its leaders were students of Nikolai Klado, who had been one of the most powerful spokesmen for the new navalism in Russia as a teacher at the Naval Academy from 1895 to 1917. From 1917 until his death in 1919 he had headed that institution. Klado had a profound impact on both the Naval Academy and upon the a major portion of the research done regarding the naval history of World War I. Among the most outstanding spokesmen for a balanced oceanic navy was the naval historian M. A. Petrov, whose work on Russia's naval preparations for World War I emphasized the failure of the tsarist government to create an oceanic navy.⁶⁴

⁶² K. F. Skorobogatkin, 50 let vooruzhennykh sil SSSR (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1968), pp. 172-176.

⁶³ Robert Waring Herrick, Soviet Naval Strategy; Fifty Years of Theory and Practice (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1968), pp. 9-27.

⁶⁴ M. A. Petrov, Podgotovka Rossii k mirovoi voine na more (Moscow: Gosvoenizdat, 1926), p. 3-15. Petrov was a most prolific author with a substantial interest in technological innovation and its impact upon naval campaigns and engagements. See: M. A. Petrov, Obzor glavneishikh kampanii i srazhenii parovogo flota v sviazi s evoliutsiei voenno-morskogo iskusstva (Leningrad:

Petrov when he addressed the problem of cooperation and army-navy combined operations it was in terms of coastal defense and not offensive operations.⁶⁵

Other naval officers, notably N. Novikov, placed greater stress upon combined operations as one of the most decisive forms of offensive combat and emphasized the need to learn from the problems encountered during World War I. Young Soviet naval commanders, who had fought the Civil War, were predisposed by their own experiences to support such a concept of "little war."⁶⁶ Limited resources, the nature of probable opponents, problems of naval education and political indoctrination, and combat experience thus combined in the 1920s to place greater emphasis upon coastal defense and joint operations, in which light forces, submarines, and naval aviation had pride of place.⁶⁷ V. I. Zof, Chief of the Naval Forces, made this point

Gosvoenizdat, 1927) and M. A. Petrov, Boevoe primeneniye vozdukhnykh sil v morskoi voine: Posobie dlia komandnogo sostava RKKA (Moscow: Gosvoenizdat, 1925).

⁶⁵ M. A. Petrov, Obozneniye beregov: Kriticheskiy ocherk zadach i vzaimodeystviy razlichnykh rodov vooruzhennykh sil pri oboznenii beregov (Moscow: Gosvoenizdat, 1926), pp. 7-9, 203-205.

⁶⁶ I. Zabelin, "Iz istorii nachal'nogo perioda razvitiia sovetskogo voenno-morskogo iskusstva," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 7 (July 1959), pp. 70-75.

⁶⁷ Critical to all Soviet work on military doctrine and force development during this period was the concept of "future war" which was specifically linked with operational art, technological development, the political-class nature of the society of potential adversaries, and the socio-economic and economic-technical potentials of the opposing sides as they applied to military potential. See: V. K. Triandafillov, Kharakter operatsii sovremennykh armii (Moscow: Gosvoenizdat, 1929) and Sovetskaia voennaia entsiklopediia (Moscow:

in his survey of the international situations, the immediate threat confronting the USSR, and the missions of Soviet naval forces in 1925.⁶⁸

With the interpenetration of Marxism-Leninism into Soviet military writings and education during the NEP, the Young School mounted a critique of Klado as a philosophical idealist, who emphasized "eternal and unchanging principles of war" at the expense of the dialectics of armed conflict, which had its base in historical and dialectical materialism. Eternal truths robbed the observer of the ability to foresee by transforming military thought into aphorisms and abstractions and robbing it of both a concrete sense of time and space. In this critique military science's essential topic was the study of "future war" [budushchaia voina] and a premium was to be placed upon systematic exposition under the slogan "to know that means to foresee."⁶⁹

The Young School found powerful support for its position among the most talented commanders of the Red Army. Both tsarist military specialists [voenspetsy] and young Red commanders were agreed that one of the compelling lessons of the arms race before the World War had been the excessive expenditures on naval forces

Gosudarstvennoe Slovarno-Entsiklopicheskoe Izdatel'stvo, 1933), II, cc: 834-844.

⁶⁸ V. Zof, "Mezhdunarodnoe polozhenie i zadachi morskoi oborony SSSR," Morskoi sbornik, No. 5 (May 1925), pp. 1-17.

⁶⁹ "Voennaia nauka i dialektika," Morskoi sbornik, No. 1, (January 1925), pp. 17-27.

by continental powers, including Russia. These officers argued that the key to military success was the intense study of the possibilities of future war [budushchaia voina], which included addressing political, social, economic, and technological factors which would shape such a contest. In the late 1920s Soviet military officers argued over whether such a war would be dominated by attrition or decisive maneuver, but they were agreed that technological changes now demanded a working out of a correct "correlation" among not two arms, i. e., army and navy, but three to include an "air fleet."⁷⁰

Two of the most telling commentators on this subject were A. A. Svechin and B. M. Shaposhnikov. Svechin wrote the first Soviet work on military strategy and coined the term operational art. Shaposhnikov addressed the issue in his three-volume study of the role of the general staff in war, in which he identified that organ as the "brain of the army." Shaposhnikov was very concerned about the costs of naval forces. Naval construction cost "devilish money" and, therefore, one had to build with economy to

⁷⁰ As elsewhere, the USSR had witnessed an intense debate in the early 1920s over the question of whether the "air fleet" would replace the navy. However, by the mid-1920s the issue had become one of defining the nature of naval aviation. See: V. Vasil'ev, "Nekotorye mysli o primenении morskoi aviatstsii v voennoe vremia," Morskoi sbornik, No. 6 (June 1924), pp. 60-69; V. Svobodin, "O morskoi vozdushnoi flote," Morskoi sbornik, No. 4 (April 1925), pp. 56-57; D. Sokolov, "Primenenie aviatsii dlia bor'by s podvodnymi lodkami," Morskoi sbornik, No. 5 (May 1925), pp. 80-90; A. Algazin, "Sovremennye tendentsii morskoi aviatstsii," Morskoi sbornik, No. 11 (November 1925), pp. 89-104; and P. I. Smirnov, "K itogam spora o morskoi i vozdushnoi flote," Morskoi sbornik, No. 6 (June 1926), pp. 16-23.

meet specific missions. "Luxury can not be tolerated."⁷¹

Shaposhnikov, who became the "father" of the Soviet General Staff, not only shaped the general approach which military and naval analysts brought to the study of future war, but also had a close relationship with Stalin at a time when Stalin had already established his political hegemony within the Party and the state apparatus.⁷² Shaposhnikov's approach to the question of future war set the context for a general discussion of this issue.

In 1929 as part of a series of articles devoted to all aspects of future war, V. Peretersky discussed the major trends affecting "navies' combat means in a future war." Peretersky assumed that a future war would be a total war, which would require the mobilization of the entire state, population and economy. He went further to assert that the technological potential of the belligerents would have a decisive impact upon the course and outcome of the struggle. He anticipated that such a conflict would be war to exhaustion. Naval operations would be subordinated to the struggle ashore, which would be decisive:

Thus the naval front according to our views will be only part of the general front of armed conflict, of the war's

⁷¹ B. M. Shaposhnikov, Moeg armii (Moscow: Voennyi Vestnik, 1927-1929), I, 255.

⁷² A. M. Vasilevskii and M. V. Zakharov, "Predislovie," in: B. M. Shaposhnikov, Vospominaniia. voenno-nauchnye trudy (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1974), pp. 9-23. In his memoirs on the prewar years Admiral Kuznetsov makes the telling comment that the only person in Stalin's entire entourage whom the dictator addressed by his first name and patronymic (a sign of deep respect in Russian) was Boris Mikhailovich Shaposhnikov. No other senior military commander or Party official was addressed in this fashion. See: N. G. Kuznetsov, Nakanune (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1966), p. 280.

front, i. e. a continuation of the land front, so that it must be united with it by a general command, by a common plan of direction, and therefore all operation taking place in it must be coordinated and linked with the operations taking place on the land front.⁷³

Under the influence of a group of highly talented and thoughtful young commanders the decade 1926-1936 witnessed the development of a Soviet conception of such operations on the land front in a future war. This stressed both operational mass and maneuver. Soviet military art laid stress upon successive deep operations by tank and mechanized forces supported by air armies.⁷⁴ The center of gravity of Soviet combat power would be its ground-air combination, and the Navy was assigned to a supporting role.

It was not an accident that the publication of Combat Regulations [Boevoi ustav] for the Navy in 1929 and 1937 followed in the wake of the appearance of new field regulations [polevoi ustav] for the Red Army. Even with Stalinist industrialization of the first and second Five Year Plans naval development proceeded more slowly than that of land forces down to 1938. In addition, naval development emphasized the acquisition of modern light forces, submarines, naval aviation, torpedo boats and destroyers. Between 1927 and 1941 Soviet ship yards laid down the hulls of

⁷³ V. Peretersky, "Boevye sredstva flotov v voine budushchego (Kak sledstvie razvitiia voenno-morskoi tekhniki za dva poslednie desiatiletiia)," Voina i revoliutsiia, Kn. 2 (1929). pp. 119-120.

⁷⁴ Jacob W. Kipp, "Mass, Mobility, and the Red Army's Road to Operational Art, 1918-1936," in: Carl Reddel, ed., Transformation in Russian and Soviet Military History (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, forthcoming).

533 warships, of which 312 entered service. More than two thirds of the ships entering service (206) were submarines. By 1941 naval aviation contained over 2500 aircraft.⁷⁵

In the late 1937, at the time of the establishment of the Peoples Commissariat of the Navy when the Soviet General Staff was busily preparing its threat estimates to guide the military requirements of the Third Five-Year Plan, the Soviet Union dramatically announced a commitment to the creation of an oceanic navy. The newly appointed Peoples Commissar of the Navy (NARKONVMF) P. A. Smirnov, a political commissar with Party duties in both the Red Army and Navy, now proclaimed the construction of a powerful oceanic navy as the objective of Soviet policy.⁷⁶

With Stalin's purge of the military in full swing, it appeared that the Soviet Navy was about to shift its emphasis from light forces to a capital fleet, as advocated by the old school. Viachislav Molotov's proclamation of an oceanic navy as a national priority was given prominent play in Morskoi sbornik.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ A. B. Kalishev, ed., Voprosy taktiki v sovetskikh voennykh trudakh (1917-1941 gg.) (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1970), pp. 424-425.

⁷⁶ P. A. Smirnov, "Moguchii morskoi i okeanskii flot," Pravda, (February 3, 1938). See also: P. Golubev, "Meropriiatiia kommunisticheskoi partii po razvitiu i ukrepleniiu VMF SSSR nakanune Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny (1937-1941 gg.)," Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 9, (September 1983), pp. 65-72.

⁷⁷ A. Pukhov, "Partiino-politicheskaia rabota v voenno-morskom flote za 20 let," Morskoi sbornik, No. 2, (February 1938), p. 56.

It seemed for a time as if the Navy was in the process of regaining the independent status it had enjoyed under tsarism.

German naval attaches in Moscow took note of this new line, described it as a 180 degree turn in Soviet naval strategy and considered it a victory for classical naval theory. The German naval attache did note that the polemics between the old and young schools were presented to Soviet naval officers as a competition between two sinister groups, composed of enemies of the people, who were striving to subvert the maritime defenses of the Soviet state.⁷⁹ The new position was described as Stalinist, and therefore ideologically correct.

German naval analysts were at a loss to explain such charges of betrayal and subversion. They sensed, however, that the harsher criticisms were aimed at the young school. Its members had over emphasized light forces (submarines and naval aviation) and had under-estimated the value of capital ships, and had stressed attrition as opposed to the single decisive naval engagement, as the way to victory.⁸⁰ The German naval attaches could not explain the set of circumstances which had led to such a radical shift in naval policy in so short a period of time.

While these years are among the darkest in Soviet history as a result of the purges and the chaotic situation among civilian and military cadres, it is possible to identify certain objective

⁷⁹ Bundesarchiv, Militaerarchiv [Hereafter cited as BA,MA], RM 6/66 "Strategische Theorien der Spwjetmarine (sic)," pp. 2-4.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 3-6.

conditions which contributed to the shift to an oceanic navy. By late 1937 the Spanish Civil War was already into its second year. For over a year Soviet naval advisors as "volunteers" had taken part in the struggle on the Republican side. The most important task for the naval forces of the Spanish Republic became the protection of its sea lines of communication, especially those with the USSR, from which flowed the arms and supplies to sustain the Republican forces in their struggle against the Franco's rebels and their Italian and German supporters. N. G. Kuznetsov, one of the Soviet naval volunteers to see the limitations of the Republic's Navy, returned to Moscow in August 1937 to report on the first year of the war at sea. He came back with an appreciation of the risks involved in fighting a powerful opponent with the means of a "little war" and recognized the importance of heavy surface combatants, ship air defenses and naval aviation. Kuznetsov became aware of what might be achieved by their immediate and decisive use.⁹⁰

At the same time the political-military situation in the Far East was becoming more tense. Six years after its conquest of Manchuria Japan attacked the Chinese Republic. Relations between the USSR and the Japanese Empire deteriorated steadily as the Soviet Union increased its military support for Mongolia and the Chinese Republic. In 1932 the Soviet Far Eastern Flotilla had been reorganized as a third fleet, the Pacific Fleet, and by 1937

⁹⁰ N. G. Kuznetsov, Na dalekom meridiane: Vospominaniia uchastnika natsional'no-revoliutsionnoi voyny v Ispanii 2nd Edition, (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), pp. 251-252.

it was the largest Soviet fleet in terms of personnel.⁹¹ At the same time, however, as both naval and army commanders in the Far East were aware, Soviet naval forces were no match for the Japanese Navy and would have to contest them using submarines and land-based naval aviation. War not only appeared more likely, but it also clearly had assumed the character of a "great war," involving a contest with a coalition of major capitalist powers, particularly Germany and Japan. A viable defense hinged upon the ability of the various arms of the navy to cooperate and upon the cooperation between the army and fleet.⁹² During the fighting around Lake Khasan in the summer of 1938 Kuznetsov's Pacific Fleet took an active hand in supporting the Soviet ground forces, creating a Naval Detachment of Special Assignment composed of merchantmen, tugs, fishing boats under escort by MTBs, a destroyer and a coastal defense craft.⁹³ Among those forces involved in the escorting of troop convoys were the vessels of the 7th Naval Brigade, commanded by Captain 3rd Rank S. G. Gorshkov.

In 1938-1939 it appeared that the Soviet-Japanese rivalry might escalate from minor border clashes into full-scale war. This situation and the rival of German naval power after 1936 created a need for a radical expansion of both the Pacific and

⁹¹ N. G. Kuznetsov, Nakanune, p. 195.

⁹² Ibid., pp 209-210.

⁹³ V. Sologub, "Tikhookeanskii Flot v period boev u ozera Khasan," Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 8, (August 1978), pp. 121-122.

Baltic Fleets. At the XVIII Party Congress in 1938 Kuznetsov, who had assumed the post of CinC Pacific Fleet, stated: "we must build various classes of vessels conforming to our naval theaters and conforming to our probable opponents."⁵⁴ As V. Danilov has pointed out, the NARKOMVMF had no independent role in the actual military assessment of the threat; all questions relating to operational and mobilization plans were the province of the General Staff of the RKKA.⁵⁵ B. M. Shaposhnikov, its newly appointed Chief, reversed his position of the late 1920s opposing naval expansion.

The General Staff's threat assessment for the Third Five-Year-Plan addressed the need for an oceanic navy and called for the construction of modern battleships, heavy cruisers, and aircraft carriers as the only means of extending the Soviet state's naval defenses beyond its immediate coastal waters. At the same time the program far exceeded the capacity of Soviet ship yards to meet the demands. Attempts to purchase modern combatants abroad did not meet with great success. This was a long-term program, and what haunted Soviet naval planners most of all was whether war would come in twenty months, rather than twenty-years. As Kuznetsov observed in his own memoirs:

⁵⁴ A. V. Basov, Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945: Opyt operativno-strategicheskogo primeneniia (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), p. 30.

⁵⁵ V. Danilov, "General'nyi shtab RKKA v predvoennye gody (1936-iiun' 1941 g.)," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 3, (March 1980), p. 71.

In such circumstances, as experience showed, to make long-term plans of naval construction was, of course, risky. A great navy is not only ships but also naval bases, docks, ship-repair facilities, warehouses, training institutions, and much more. The creation of all this demands a great deal of time and tremendous resources. The program, of course, could not be laid out even in one five year plan.⁵⁶

Shortly after the Party Congress Kuznetsov was named First Deputy Commissar and then, in April 1939, Commissar of Naval Affairs. In this post he worked closely with Stalin, Shaposhnikov, and A. A. Zhdanov in bringing to life this naval construction program.⁵⁷ Events in Europe and the Far East shortly called this long-term program into question. In October 1940 after the German victory in France and the failure of the Germans to invade England, the Soviet government suspended the construction of all large combatants and concentrated on destroyers, submarines, torpedo boats and auxiliaries, which could be completed in a short time.⁵⁸

The anticipated creation of an oceanic navy encouraged serious reconsideration of the basic problems of operational cooperation between the Army and Navy, which had been at the heart of the naval theory of the young school. I. S. Isakov, who had taken part in the Enzeli operation of 1920 and rose to prominence in the Navy in the inter-war period to become Chief of Staff of the Naval Forces of the Baltic Sea in 1935, addressed

⁵⁶ Kuznetsov, Nakanune, p. 226.

⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 218-261.

⁵⁸ Basov, Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945, p. 33.

this topic in several essays published in the pre-war period. The most important of these was his article, "The Navy in a Future War," published in Komsomol'skaia pravda in January 1938. Isakov, who had experience with amphibious operations and written on the topic, took the German amphibious assault upon the islands of Ezel' and Moon in the Gulf of Riga during the fall of 1917 as the model for such operational amphibious landings. He described them in the following terms:

One should consider the amphibious operation as one of the more characteristic operations in a future war. This type of combat is quite complex since here the cooperation of land units with naval [units] is necessary. In these battles the troops selected for landing, transports to carry them, destroyers and escort vessels to protect the transports at sea from submarine attacks, mine sweepers to clear path through mine fields, and aviation to conduct reconnaissance must take part. Beside this, these operations require the participation of cruisers, which along with gunboats will provide fire support with their artillery for the landing. The basic maneuver forces, composed of a squadron of capital ships and heavy aviation, must protect the landing from the enemy's decisive counter stroke.⁸⁹

The same description would have fit the operations of the Black Sea Fleet of Lazistan and Trebizond as well. Modern capital ships were thus integrated into one of the most important combined operations. Isakov made no mention of specially designed landing craft and so seemed to hark back to the improvisations which had proven successful in the Black Sea. In fact, it remained to be seen whether a modern combined-arms force could rely upon such wartime conversions for amphibious operations.

⁸⁹ Isakov, Izbrannye trudy, p. 185.

Isakov also considered operations to counter enemy amphibious assaults [protivodesantnaia operatsiia] as a matter of combined action. But in that case the crucial role fell to submarines, aviation, and the concentration of all means of coastal defense against the enemy during the landing and when ashore. Isakov listed several independent missions for naval forces, especially blockade and protection of sea lines of communication, but even in these cases he did not emphasize the single decisive naval engagement between battle fleets. Instead, Isakov stressed two inter-connected and mutually-affecting forms of naval combat: a succession of episodic operations of high intensity, organized around the theater commander's intent and executed according to his plan and, at the same time, the day-to-day tasks of combat support associated with mine and anti-mine warfare, submarine and anti-submarine warfare, naval and air reconnaissance.⁹⁰ Shortly after the publication of this article Isakov became Deputy NARKOMVMF.

While Isakov's focus was upon operational-tactical combined actions like those of the German Navy in the Baltic or the Russian Navy in the Black Sea, other Russian naval officers saw in the new oceanic navy the potential for a strategic coup de main. A. V. Nemitts, graduate of the tsarist Naval Academy, Red naval specialist during the Civil War, CinC Soviet Navy in 1921-1923, and then professor of naval art at the Military Academy from 1924 to 1940, was more ambitious in his proposals for

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 185-186.

cooperation of the army and navy. Nemitts identified three strategic missions for the navy which would influence the course and outcome of the war. Among these were naval blockade to starve the national economy or cut the state rear off from its fighting army, use of the sea to move an army to destroy the enemy army or to counter such actions by an opponent, and operational-tactical cooperation of the army with units of the fleet when they act on a single field of battle. Whereas Isakov had emphasized the latter form of cooperation, Nemitts called attention to the possibility of a strategic blow.

Reviewing Germany's geo-strategic situation in 1914, Nemitts stated that its armed forces were incapable of delivering a decisive blow against either France or Russia. Instead, the Soviet naval officer proposed a surprise amphibious assault by 200,000 troops on England itself. Nemitts based his case for such an option on British politico-military vulnerability and the dispositions of naval forces which existed in 1914.

Nemitts, in fact, was proposing a succession of deep operations, which culminated not in Paris but in London. The first stage was an advance through Belgium, creation of a defensive line on the Somme, seizure of the French ports on the English Channel, followed by a sortie of the High Seas Fleet and the dispatch of the German transport fleet to the Channel Ports. The success of such a combined operation hinged upon surprise.

Once the transports and warships were in the Channel, Nemitts proposed that the German High Seas Fleet would begin

laying two powerful mine barriers to the north and south. The German Navy would then take up a defensive position to cover its invasion fleet and invite the Royal Navy to break through such a position. Nemits expected that the successful landing of the first army would be followed by a second and then a third wave, until Germany had 600,000 in England.⁹¹

While Nemits' proposal bordered on the foolhardy, his point for a Soviet naval audience was that there could be strategic-operational circumstances where combined actions of army and fleet went beyond the direct support of the maritime flank of a front. Reduced to basics, Nemits was arguing two points. First, he asserted: "therefore for a successful war of a great power a first-class navy is as necessary as a first-class army." Second, he proposed to abandon one of the most fundamental principles of naval strategy, i. e. that struggle for command of the sea

preceded and was a precondition for any such attempts to use sea lines of communication for the transport of an invading army to a hostile shore. Against those who saw the chances of success too limited to justify the risks, Nemits pointed to Peter the Great at Gangut who had taken a calculated risk and won.⁹²

Nemits wrote months before the Wehrmacht's victories in Norway, the Low Countries and France would place on the agenda of the Kriegsmarine the very problem which he had raised in his

⁹¹ A. Nemits, "Vzaimodelstvie armii i flota," *Voennaya mysel*, No. 9 (September 1939), pp. 37-55.

⁹² Ibid., pp. 58-59.

article. German naval planners, while quite daring in the planning and execution of the Norwegian Operation, when confronted with the grave risks involved in such an invasion of England and the real problems of bringing about cooperation among the Army, Luftwaffe, and Kriegsmarine were not so willing to take such a grave risk. The German Navy of 1940 was not the Kaiser's Navy of 1914. Indeed, its heavy losses during the Norwegian Campaign had taxed its resources to the very limits. However, Nemits would have answered that its thinking was, however, dominated by the same "unfounded caution" which had condemned it to inaction in 1914 and so had created the opportunity for England to apply its naval blockade and the steady strangulation of the national economy.⁹³

Military operations in 1940 seemed to confirm the importance of joint operations. Norway, even if it lacked the decisiveness of a cross-channel invasion, was the sort of high-risk venture which Nemits had recommended. Soviet naval officers saw in the Dunkirk evacuation confirmation of the need to plan and prepare for joint operations. V. A. Belli informed Soviet naval officers that the lessons of Dunkirk were: the need for "close mutual interaction and support [tesnoe vzaimodeistvie] of the army, navy and aviation," in carrying out such an evacuation, the decisiveness of command of the air over the operational area, and the critical nature of favorable geo-strategic conditions, the exceptional difficulties associated with the evacuation of not

only men but also combat materials and equipment, and the absence of effective mutual-interaction and support by German naval, ground and air forces in countering this evacuation."

The decisive German victories in the first year of the European war and the problems observed in all branches of the Soviet armed forces during the Winter war with Finland set in motion a hasty set of reforms to improve combat capabilities and to prepare for what was recognized at the very top of the Soviet state and military as a decisive confrontation with Hitler's Germany. Both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union were maneuvering to prepare for a war that seemed only a matter of time.

VZAJMORAZSTVIE AND COMBINED ACTION DURING THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR

In that same period German naval officers began to consider the implications of an attack upon the Soviet Union and a wider war. Grossadmiral Erich Raeder, Cinc Kriegsmarine, reports in his memoirs that he was kept uninformed of the initial planning for an attack on the Soviet Union.⁹² However, the Chief of the Naval War Staff Admiral Otto Schniewind ordered a study by that staff to address the question in late July 1940, when Operation Sea Lion was still a possibility. The Naval War Staff viewed England as enemy number one and saw the need to conclude that war before

⁹² V. A. Belli, "Uroki Dvukerkoskoi operatsii," *Morskoi sbornik*, No. 3, (March 1941), pp. 13-14.

⁹³ Erich Raeder, *My Life* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1960), pp. 332-327.

- 96 Ibid., pp. 41-42.
 97 BA, MA, RM 6/66 "Betrachtungen ueber Russland," pp. 36-42.
 98 Ibid., pp. 36-38.

any operation against Russia was undertaken. It acknowledged a fear that German hegemony on the continent would never be secure until the question of Russia had been resolved. These officers doubted any possibility of long-term cooperation with "Bolshevism," warned that Soviet gains threatened German interests in the East, and pictured Russia as both a source of vital raw materials and in the long run a market for German goods. Indeed, in the critical area of oil the staff identified one of the most compelling reasons why war with the Soviet Union should be postponed until after the war against England had been won. In July 1940 the Naval War Staff still expected the Luftwaffe to do this by destroying the Royal Air Force, British industry, the Royal Navy and England's strong points.⁹⁶ One of the war aims, which the Naval War Staff emphasized, was the transformation of the Baltic into a German "Mare nostrum." Like German army officers, they saw the Soviet military as quite weak in comparison with the German and expected unrest among the national minorities along the border to further undercut Soviet combat power.⁹⁷ Proper presentation of the Germany's attack upon the Soviet Union as a move to protect the small states, especially Finland, from Soviet aggression could contribute to the diplomatic isolation of the USSR.⁹⁸

Militarily the focus of attention fell upon the Baltic Fleet. This Fleet was seen as aimed directly against Germany, and the staff noted that the Soviet territorial gains at the expense of Finland and the Baltic States had made it a more serious threat with which to reckon. The Naval War Staff proposed to destroy that fleet by an advance up to Lake Ladoga, where German and Finnish troops would meet. Robbed of its bases, the Baltic Fleet would lose its combat power and could be dealt with easily. These officers concentrated their attention upon the destruction of the Baltic Fleet. They were willing to consider a surprise U-boat attack upon Soviet capital ships even before the start of hostilities if responsibility for such an action could be denied.⁹⁹

In its version of an invasion of the Soviet Union the Naval War Staff proposed an advance to a line Lake Ladoga-Smolensk-Crimea, and left the question of the occupation of Moscow open, depending upon the season of the year. Several points stand out regarding staff's ideas regarding the Navy's contribution to what would become Operation Barbarossa. First, the Navy's heavy forces and its U-boat arm were to continue to concentrate their efforts against England, although the staff, like Grossadmiral Raeder, was clearly not enthusiastic about an immediate cross-channel invasion and spoke of postponing it until May 1941. The Navy's contribution to victory in the east would be primarily light forces, and the staff acknowledged that the "Schwerpunkt" of the

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 38-41.

operation would be the German ground and air forces.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the staff study provided a set of objectives in the Baltic littoral, with which these forces would have to deal, but could offer very little help. Furthermore, the staff's considerations totally ignored the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, which, while not a threat to Germany proper, was uncomfortably close to a key source of the Reich's oil supply in Rumania.

Germany's allies had no effective naval power to challenge the Black Sea Fleet for command of the sea, and Germany's limited ability to shift a few light forces into the theater was not even given serious attention until December 1941. Even if the staff's version of operations against the Soviet Union would have been a complete success, the Black Sea Fleet could still have operated against the German maritime flank from its bases at Novorossiisk and Batumi.¹⁰¹ Although a naval mission was sent to Rumania in May 1941, German naval planning did not resolve the problem of dealing with the Black Sea Fleet.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 42.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 39. The Naval War Staff enumerated the naval strength of the Baltic Fleet and called attention to the 1300 Soviet aircraft, which German intelligence estimated, were located in the Baltic states but made no mention of the Black Sea Fleet or the Soviet air power available for operation on that flank of the Eastern Front.

¹⁰² Ibid., M/698/45605 "Kriegstagebuch der Deutschen Marinemission Rumaenien (1 Mai 1941 - 30 November 1941). See also: Fuehrer Conferences on Naval Affairs in: Brassey's Naval Annual 1948 (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 245, 262.

From the first signal sent out by Admiral Kuznetsov placing Soviet Naval Forces on a high state of alert on the night of June 21-22 questions of vzaimodeistvie and combined action figured prominently in the employment of Soviet naval power.¹⁰³ While the Baltic and Black Sea Fleets were, in fact, quite evenly matched in their combat power (capital ships, light surface forces, submarines, and aviation), the operational-strategic situation of the Black Sea Fleet was far more favorable, and this permitted it from the first month of the war to engage in both independent and combined operations of greater operational-strategic importance. Unlike the Black Sea Fleet which had a well-developed network of bases throughout the depth of its theater, the Baltic Fleet had only just added a set of forward bases in the Finnish Gulf (Tallin and Hango) and in the Baltic (Riga, Libau, and on the islands of the Gulf of Riga) to support its permanent bases at Kronstadt and Leningrad. During this period the most critical combined operations for the Red Banner Baltic Fleet were the stubborn defense of these bases and after the evacuation of Tallin the employment of fleet personnel and assets to bolster the land and maritime defenses of besieged Leningrad.¹⁰⁴ The Northern Fleet, which had only been organized as a fleet since 1937, was undergoing expansion in the wake of the Winter War.

¹⁰³ Kuznetsov, Nakanune, pp. 314-339.

¹⁰⁴ V. F. Tributs, "Rol' Krasnoznamennogo Baltiiskogo Flota v voine," in: A. M. Samsonov et al., eds., Krasnoznamennyi Baltiiskii Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), pp. 10-12.

However, its combat power was severely limited in terms of forces and support infrastructure at the start of the war.

At the time of the German attack the Pacific Fleet was the most powerful Soviet naval force in terms of its strike assets. It deployed 1183 combat aircraft, 91 submarines and 135 torpedo boats. Only its air assets could be moved quickly and with some ease to reinforce the Soviet forces fighting in European Russia.¹⁰⁵ However, even these could not be redeployed in large numbers until it was absolutely clear that Imperial Japan did not intend to join in the attack upon the Soviet Union. In the first six months of the war it appears that over 600 aircraft and crews were transferred from the Pacific Fleet to the Front.¹⁰⁶ The Pacific Fleet and Amur Flotilla provided the man power to staff 12 of the 25 naval rifle brigades formed in 1941.¹⁰⁷ Transfer of surface warships and submarines from the Pacific to the Northern

¹⁰⁵ Basov, Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945, pp. 33-38.

¹⁰⁶ Basov, Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945, p. 37 and Zakharov et al., Krasnoznamennyi Tikhookeanskii Flot, p. 147. Basov puts the air strength of the Pacific Fleet at 1183 aircraft on June 22, 1941, while Zakharov says that during 1941 the Fleet had almost 500 aircraft. The difference in these figures suggest a strategic-operational re-deployment of Pacific Fleet Naval Aviation of around 700 planes in 1941. The operational regrouping of naval air units proved to be one of the most flexible forms of operational-strategic regrouping of forces and means available within and between theaters of military action available to Stavka and NARKOMVMF during the war. Thus, between the end of the War against Germany and the initiation of hostilities against Japan the Soviet Navy was able to augment the aviation of the Pacific Fleet and Amur Flotilla to 1500 aircraft.

¹⁰⁷ S. E. Zakharov et al., Krasnoznamennyi Tikhookeanskii Flot 2nd Edition (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), pp. 152-153.

Fleet began in 1942. The Navy also had four flotillas with limited combat assets: the newly formed Danubian, the Caspian, the Pinsk, and the Amur.

In prewar planning for combined operations, involving ground, air and naval forces primary leadership was entrusted to the Soviet General Staff, which assumed the role of "brain" of the armed forces and acted as "the highest organ of control of the country's armed forces."¹⁰⁸ In practice this meant that the General Staff worked out the strategic war plans and then entrusted to the staffs of the coastal military districts and the staffs of the appropriate fleets the specific plans for the use of covering forces and the combined defense of the coast. Soviet military doctrine assumed that such a defense would incorporate immediate and repeated counter-strokes on the enemy's maritime flank. These actions could be independent actions by fleet units or combined actions, involving army and naval units.¹⁰⁹

With the start of hostilities the NARKOMVMF with the concurrence of the Main Naval Council ordered the initiation of the operations outlined in each fleet's war plans. Mine barriers were laid, submarines sent out on patrol to execute unrestricted submarine warfare, a convoy system was introduced along with naval direction of all navigation, air and surface units were ordered to attack enemy warships and merchantmen at sea. The

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 216.

individual fleet commands did not have the authority to begin attacks on airfields, port and other targets in enemy territory. Once the Stavka of the Supreme High Command of the Soviet Armed Forces was organized it assumed responsibility for such decisions regarding the employment of the fleets.¹¹⁰

The surprise, weight and speed of the German offensive quickly created demands by the ground forces for naval support in stemming the tide. The tempo of these initial operations placed a tremendous strain upon centralized decision-making. The very scale of warfare made it imperative that front and fleet commanders be given more immediate and timely guidance than Stavka could provide. As a partial and only marginally effective solution to this problem the State Defense Committee created three intermediary instances of command between Stavka and the fronts and fleets. These "strategic directions" - northwestern, western, and southwestern - were headed by their own CinCs with a supporting staff. The Northwestern strategic direction had under its control the Baltic and Northern Fleets, while the Southwestern had the Black Sea Fleet. The Northwestern CinC in turn placed the two fleets under the operational control of the Commander of Northern Front. When that front was split into the Karelian and Leningrad Fronts in late August 1941 the Northern Fleet was subordinated to the former and the Baltic to the latter front.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 216-217.

These arrangements brought some improvement in the conduct of coastal defense, which included fire support for Soviet forces, prevention of enemy amphibious assaults, and defense of naval bases. Neither naval nor army commanders were experienced in such combined actions on such a scale, and as Soviet officers admit, the process of working out the organization of cooperation to support combined actions took time and practice. A crucial step in this process was the appointment of naval representatives to the staffs of the appropriate directions, fronts and armies.¹¹¹

Such subordination of the fleets to the directions and fronts did not preclude either independent actions by the fleets or proposals for combined actions initiated by naval commands and staffs. Independent operations, which were initiated by the Main Naval Staff and had the endorsement of the General Staff and Stavka, included the decision to send naval heavy bombers from Ezel' and Moon Island airfields against Berlin in August 1941.¹¹² While hardly a serious threat to Germany's war potential, these strikes did provoke the German High Command into assigning Luftwaffe, Army, and Naval units to attack Moon, Ezel and Dago Islands in September. After a month of fighting Operation Beowulf opened the Gulf of Riga to German shipping, but for that month it

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 217-218.

¹¹² N. G. Kuznetsov, Na flotakh boevaia trevoga (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1971), pp. 36-40.

drew away vital air, naval, and ground forces from the operations directed against Leningrad and Kronstadt.¹¹³

The Black Sea Fleet initiated similar strikes by air, surface and submarine forces against Rumania with the start of hostilities, suggesting that such attacks were a part of the Soviet war plan. However, initial losses and concern over a German amphibious threat brought those initial efforts to an end.¹¹⁴ On June 23-25 bomber units from the Black Sea Fleet mounted day and night attacks upon the oil facilities at Constanta. These unescorted attacks, which appear to have been pre-planned strikes based upon the Soviet war plan, inflicted significant damage upon the port facilities, tank farms, cracking plant, and vessels and drew German fighters back to the defense of this high-value target. From June to August Black Sea Naval Aviation mounted air raids against Constanta, Ploesti, and other targets, including 18 small-scale raids on the storage tanks and refineries at Ploesti.¹¹⁵ In late July the State Defense Committee ordered a renewed series of air attacks upon Ploesti and the railroad bridge and pipeline across the Danube at Chernavod during the first half of August. Four separate raids were mounted between August 5 and 18. This offensive, which

¹¹³ BA, MA, RL 2 IV/34 "Der Einsatz der Luftwaffe bei der Besetzung der Baltischen Inseln," pp. 1-11.

¹¹⁴ Basov, Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945, pp. 135-136.

¹¹⁵ N. F. Zotkin et al., Krasnoznamennyi Chernomorskii flot 2nd Edition, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1979), pp. 133-134.

involved only 25 sorties by DB-3 naval bombers and other specialized aircraft, was called off after the fourth raid because of the mounting threat to Odessa and the Crimea.¹¹⁶

In the Baltic and Black Sea these independent air, surface and submarine operations were designed to provoke German counter actions, which would influence the development of subsequent operations. In the Baltic the effect was psychology with tactical-operational consequence. In the Black Sea the operations forced the Germans to redeploy fighters and flak guns to increase the protection of the Rumanian oil fields and helped to prod the German High Command into shifting the direction of subsequent operations from the Smolensk-Moscow axis and into the Ukraine, where Hitler proclaimed the capture of the Crimea, the Soviet's unsinkable aircraft carrier, as an operational objective.¹¹⁷

In the desperate fighting of the first period of the Great Patriotic War (June 1941 - November 1942) cooperation took the form of naval support for front and army defensive positions and counter-attacks. Frequently ground force units were subordinated to naval commanders with the creation of port defense districts

¹¹⁶ N. Grechaniuk, "Udary Chernomorskogo flota po ob'ektam protivnika v 1941 godu," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 12, (December 1975), pp. 26-33.

¹¹⁷ Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, ed., Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht (Wehrmachtfuehrungsstab), I. August 1940-31 December 1941 in: Helmuth Greiner and Percy Ernst Schramm, eds., Kriegstagebuch des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht (Frankfurt/Main, 1961-1965), I, pp. 1066-1068.

as at Odessa, Tallin and Sevastopol.¹¹⁸ Initial combined actions by naval, air and army units suffered from a lack of understanding by the commanders and staffs of the real capabilities and needs of the other branches of the armed forces. The Black Sea Fleet Command at one point in August 1941 refused to detach its strike aviation to support the troops of the Southern Front, saying that the aircraft were needed for operations at sea, when, in fact, no direct naval threat existed.¹¹⁹

There were, however, successful cases of cooperation and combined action even in the initial period of the war. The Black Sea Fleet supported the garrison defending Odessa, bringing in reserves, needed supplies, providing necessary gunfire, and evacuating the wounded. In September as the enemy ring around Odessa grew tighter Stavka asked the Black Sea Fleet to organize the transport of infantry reserves to Odessa Defensive Area for an attack and to organize a tactical landing in the rear of the Rumanian defenders by a regiment of naval infantry at Grigor'evka in support.¹²⁰ This operation, which included a parachute drop on a Rumanian command post by specially trained naval infantry,

¹¹⁸ G. Egorov, "Sovershenstvovanie upravleniia silami VMF v pervom periode voiny," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 5, (May 1979), pp. 26-28.

¹¹⁹ Basov, Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945, p. 219.

¹²⁰ I. I. Azarov, Osazhdennaia Odessa 2nd Edition (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1966), pp. 120-163.

disrupted the Rumanian-German seige of the city and permitted the defenders to continue the defense until October 1941.

As Admiral Gorshkov has pointed out in his memoirs, this was not a flawless operation. Its success hinged upon steel nerves and quick decisions, when unexpected events threaded the operation's success. Gorshkov, then commander of the Fleet's cruiser brigade, found himself at sea with the 3rd Naval Infantry Regiment aboard his ships when the amphibious assault commander, Rear Admiral L. A. Vladimirsky, and the landing craft failed to make the rendezvous. Gorshkov was informed by radio that Vladimirsky's flagship had gone down, that the fate of the admiral was unknown and that he was to assume command of the landing. Gorshkov decided to go ahead with the landing using the ships boats and launches. This was possible because in preparing for the operation the naval command had studied that variant and ordered extra motor launches placed aboard the cruisers and destroyers. Luck also entered into the picture. The ships boats and launches were not able to get as many troops a shore as fast as the operation demanded. Just then the landing craft arrived and took over the job of getting the rest of the naval infantry ashore.¹²¹

At Odessa and later at Sevastopol the Black Sea Fleet supported a sustained defense. When after 73 days it was no longer possible to sustain the defense of Odessa the Black Sea

¹²¹ S. G. Gorshkov, "Vo flotskom stroiu," Morskoi sbornik, No. 3, (March 1987), pp. 52-56.

Fleet provided the protection and the sea lift to evacuate not only 85,000 men of the garrison and much of its equipment but also 15,000 civilians and a portion of the city's industrial plant. More than 150 warships and transports took part in this effort. Many of the troops evacuated from Odessa went directly to Sevastopol to bolster its defenses during the critical October period.¹²² Vice Admiral Friedrich Ruge in his evaluation of Soviet naval operations during World War II judged the support and evacuation of Odessa as a highly successful operation which "helped determine later events in southern Russia." Ruge considered that the defense of Odessa had thrown the German timetable back by an entire year.¹²³

In the first period of the war the Stavka employed tactical and operational scale amphibious landings as part of an all-arms effort to rest the initiative from the Germans. As Vice Admiral Stalbo has pointed out, more than one third of the amphibious landings executed by Soviet forces were carried out during this period when the strategic initiative was in German hands. Such landings took place under inadequate air cover, without specially trained troops, and in the absence of specially designed landing craft. However, in spite of all these handicaps, more than 57,000 troops were put ashore in 1941-1942, with the largest landings at

¹²² Basov, Flot v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945, pp. 143, 153. The navy evacuated 462 artillery pieces, 14 tanks, 36 armor cars, 1,156 vehicles, 163 tractors, 3,625 horses, and 25,000 tons of cargo.

¹²³ Friedrich Ruge, The Soviets as Naval Opponents, 1941-1945 (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979), pp. 189-190.

Kerch-Feodosiia in the Crimea where two armies went ashore. This counter-attack was designed to relieve pressure on Sevastopol and tie down Axis forces in the Crimea so they would be unable to render assistance to other sectors of the Eastern Front.¹²⁴

As the situation along the front stabilized and the Soviet defense slowed or stopped the German advance on the maritime flanks of the Eastern Front, a division of labor emerged with regard to the control of the fleets' operations. The coastal fronts took on the direction of the employment of naval forces in direct support of the ground forces. The deeper battle against the enemy sea lines of communications, defense of Soviet sea lines of communications, mine laying, blockade and counter-blockade activities came under the direction of the NARKOMVMF, later CinC Naval Forces, Kuznetsov and the Main Naval Staff. With the improved situation along the front more assets were released for such operations, including naval aviation. Stavka itself took on the task of organizing the protection of the Soviet Union's external sea lines of communication and organizing Soviet cooperation with Allied forces.¹²⁵

In the area of combined operations by Army, Air Forces, and Navy during the second and third periods of the war, when Soviet forces were gaining and then exploiting the strategic initiative (November 1942-May 1945) one of the most crucial developments

¹²⁴ K. Stalbo, "Ob iskusstve primeneniia morskikh desantov," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 8, (August 1977), pp. 37-38.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp. 221-222.

contributing to improved cooperation was the abolition of the three intermediary Strategic Directions and the substitution of Stavka representatives to coordinate offensive operations by fronts, air armies, and a fleet and one or more flotillas. Senior naval staff were often sent down with the Stavka representatives to improve the cooperation of naval forces.¹²⁶ By keeping a central role in the control process Stavka was able to employ its ground, air and naval assets according to its design. Central to that design was the destruction of the Wehrmacht, which Stavka and the General Staff identified as the German center of gravity. Soviet naval forces were employed to that end. In major offensive operations the quality of their contribution improved with experience.¹²⁷ Thus, while the landing of naval infantry and units of the Trans-Caucasian Front during the Kerch'-Feodosiia Operation to relieve Sevastopol (December 1941-February 1942) was marked by serious miscalculations and mistakes regarding beach selections, weather conditions, and the ability of the fleet to transport additional echelons for introduction into the fighting, the process for reviewing past combat experience provided for

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 230.

¹²⁷ N. Klitnyi, "Sodeistvie Chernomorskogo flota voiskam Sovetskoi Armii na primorskoi napravlenii v nastupatel'nykh operatsiiakh 1943-1944 gg.," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 7, (July 1983), pp.65-71.

rapid and wide dissemination of information regarding such problems and a search for solutions.¹²⁸

The contribution of naval forces to combined operations was direct and immediate as in the case of a host of tactical and operational amphibious assaults and the struggle for air supremacy. These forms came together in the struggle for the Kuban in the spring of 1943.¹²⁹ Thanks to command of the air over Novorossisk in September 1943 Soviet forces could mount a simultaneous, broad-front landing with complete surprise. Command of the air made it possible for Soviet forces to provide close air and naval gunfire support for the attackers and to deliver the necessary reinforcements in a timely fashion. Threatened with encirclement by both the twin prongs of the landing force and the troops of the Northern-Caucasian Front, German forces withdrew

¹²⁸ Kh. Kh. Kamalov, Morskaia pekhota v boiakh za rodinu (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1966), pp. 145-146.

¹²⁹ A. A. Grechko, Bitva za Kavkaz (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1967), pp. 25-327. During the Kuban fighting of 1943 Black Sea Naval Aviation received substantial enough reinforces to allow elements of its force (70 planes) to join in the air operations conducted by North Caucasus Front under the direction of Stavka representatives, Marshals G. K. Zhukov and A. A. Novikov, while sustaining deeper air strikes against the ports in the Crimea and other targets at sea. Thus, Marshal Novikov was able to coordinate the application of air units from the 4th, and 5th Air Armies, Black Sea Naval Air Forces, and Long Range Aviation in this contest for air supremacy. In this fashion the Soviet command was able to shift the correlation of forces in the air over that sector of the front in the spring of 1943. See: M. N. Kozhevnikov, Komandovanie i shtab VVS Sovetskoi Armii v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine 1941-1945 gg. (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), pp. 121-130.

towards the Kerch Straits.¹³⁰ As Vice Admiral Klitnyi has observed:

The experience of conducting amphibious operations confirmed the necessity of their thorough planning, the organization of a close mutual support and cooperation of all forces taking part in the landing and of a tight control of them.¹³¹

In the final period of the war (January 1944 - May 1945) with Soviet forces holding the strategic initiative, Stavka removed the various fleets from subordination to their respective fronts and placed them directly under the NARKOMVMF. Northern and Black Sea Fleets were so placed in March 1944, and Baltic Fleet followed in November 1944 after the relief of Leningrad.¹³² In this new situation NARKOMVMF took a more direct role in Stavka's planning of operational-strategic offensives. Naval forces took part in 13 of the 15 such operations executed during the final period of the war. The mass employment of naval assets (attack aviation, MTBs and artillery) in support of operations on the axis of the main blow went hand-in-hand with the employment of other naval assets (bomber, torpedo, and attack aviation, MTBs, and submarines) in strikes against enemy sea lines of communications and theater targets. Such was the case with naval

¹³⁰ N. Klitnyi, "Sodeistvie Chernomorskogo flota voiskam Sovetskoi Armii na primorskom napravlenii v nastupatel'nykh operatsiiakh 1943-1944 gg.," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 7, (July 1983), pp. 65-66.

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 67.

¹³² V. Chernavin, "Sovetskoe voenno-morskoe iskustvo v tretii period Velikoi Otechestvennoi voyny," Morskoi sbornik, No. 5 (May 1985), p. 15.

aviation, submarines and MTBs of the Black Sea Fleet during the liberation of the Crimea in the spring of 1944, when their strikes against the German-Rumanian sea lines of communication inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy and reduced the number and caliber of forces available for the defense of the Balkans.¹³³

This flexibility in the control of naval forces proved critical to the Soviets' ability to get timely and decisive concentrations of forces and means on the main axis of each operation.

The re-subordination of fleets and flotillas to the commands of fronts (directions) and by their return to the direct subordination of the Peoples Commissariat of the Navy Stavka conditioned the basic direction of the actions of the fleets: against enemy ground forces in cooperation with the maritime fronts or against enemy naval communications and shore targets in independent operations.¹³⁴

FAR EASTERN FINALE

What Stavka and the General Staff achieved by such coordination was the modernization of Peter's concept the two arms so that it encompassed the concentrated application of ground, naval and air power in successive operations within a continental theater of military actions. The major successes of

¹³³ K. A. Stalbo, "Chernomorskii flot v nastupatel'nykh operatsiiakh 1944 goda," Morskoi sbornik, No. 5 (May 1974), pp. 23-25.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 231.

the Soviet Armed Forces were due in good measure to the system of command and control for ground, air and naval forces which had been worked out in theory prior to the war and modified by the hard tests of praxis during the struggle. Stavka's strict centralized control of strategic-operational planning and reserves and the utilization of Stavka representatives to coordinate deep operations, employing several fronts, their air armies, and a fleet and/or flotilla(s) where appropriate provided a command system adapted to the scale of warfare on the Eastern Front.¹³⁵ The cooperation of the army and navy was a necessary response to the ever-growing complexity of modern warfare at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. Soviet authors consider a well-developed system of command and control, which facilitates cooperation among the various branches of the armed forces to be among the most important contributions of Soviet military and naval art to the development of military science during the Great Patriotic War. The decision to create a unified command for the entire Far Eastern Theater of Military Actions in 1945 is considered a mature manifestation of the Soviet approach to the strategic-operational control of all theater forces.

As the experience of the war has shown one of the most important conditions of the effectiveness of cooperations is a well-organized system of troop control. In strategic offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War the tendency of the centralization of the control of large formations of all the branches of the Armed Forces in the hands of the Stavka of the Supreme High Command with the enlistment of

¹³⁵ V. I. Achkasov and N. B. Pavlovich, Sovetskoe voenno-morskoe iskusstvo v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1973), p. 399.

the services of its representatives to the coordination of the actions of fronts and fleets in each place became self-evident. This insured a unity of will, clarity of objective, exactness of agreement of the efforts of large formations in the achievement of common goals, the high level of effectiveness of control and the sufficiently complete estimation of the concrete situation. The creation of such a strategic organ of control, as the High Command of Soviet Forces in the Far East also proved completely justified.¹³⁶

In the Far East Stavka created a theater command in June 1945 by naming Marshal A. M. Vasilevsky, former Chief of the General Staff, Stavka representative, and Commander of the 3rd Belorussian Front, to the newly created post of Commander of Soviet Forces Far East. Vasilevsky, who had planned the liberation of the Crimea and the destruction of German forces in Kurland, working closely with the CinC Soviet Naval Forces, the Main Naval Staff and the commanders and staffs of both the Black Sea and Baltic Fleets, now had the task of planning and coordinating a theater-strategic offensive, involving three fronts, three air armies, the Pacific Fleet with its naval aviation (1500 planes), the Northern Pacific Flotilla and the Amur Flotilla. Vasilevsky included on his Military Council and Staff senior commanders to coordinate air, naval, and rear services. Admiral Kuznetsov himself, the CinC Soviet Naval Forces, coordinated the naval forces, while Chief Marshal of Aviation A. A. Novikov coordinated the air offensive. Vasilevsky and his staff proposed to strike at the Kwantung Army in Manchuria using three simultaneous deep blows, directed at central Manchuria and designed to dismember the Japanese forces,

¹³⁶ Ol'shtynsky, Vzaimodeistvie armii i flota, p. 313.

isolate them in Central and Southern Manchuria and then to destroy them piecemeal while not allowing any units to retreat to their prepared defensive positions or their evacuation by sea. Marshal Malinovsky's Trans-Baikal Front was to execute the main blow from Mongolia, while Marshal Meretskov's 1st Far Eastern Front was to strike south from the Soviet Far East to cut off any possible retreat into Korea. General Purkaev's 2nd Far Eastern Front, supported by the Amur Flotilla was to execute a fixing attack to pin much of the Kwantung Army in Northern Manchuria. The Pacific Fleet under Admiral I. S. Iumashev was entrusted with a wide range of independent and combined missions in support of the fighting in Manchuria and Korea, and on Sakhalin and the Kuriles. These included cutting Japanese SLOC with Manchuria, destroying enemy naval assets and port facilities in Northern Korea through an initial operation by naval aviation, securing Soviet SLOC in theater, and preventing any Japanese amphibious counter-strokes. The scale of the success of the operation in its initial phase, the weakness of enemy coastal defenses, and the rapid collapse of the Japanese defenses made it possible for the Soviet Far Eastern Command to order a number of tactical amphibious assaults as such opportunities developed.

The entire success of this operation hinged upon the ability of the Soviets to conceal their strategic intention and operational design so that their forces could achieve operational-strategic surprise. In its scale, tempo, and decisiveness the Soviet offensive in the Far East was the

culmination of the concept of deep, successive operations in a continental theater of military actions in which cooperation and combined actions by ground, air and naval forces were concentrated according to a unified operational design and directed against the enemy's center of gravity, his available combat power in theater.¹³⁷

Soviet authors see the forms of cooperation between army and navy as worked out during the Great Patriotic War to be uniquely Soviet and especially appropriate to the situation confronting the Soviet military in those theaters and against those adversaries. These authors have grudgingly acknowledged the contribution made by Allied naval power to radical shifts in the correlation of forces in various maritime theaters in the course of the war but remain critical of the Allies' failure to create a unified operational command structure, which would institutionalize cooperation among the ground, air and naval forces. Only Operation Neptune-Overlord seems to encompass the sort of centralized, theater-strategic direction, which they identify as the most rational form of cooperation. The failure of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan to develop the mechanisms to control theater war and provide effective cooperation among the branches of their armed forces is considered an Achilles' heel of their military art which contributed to their final defeat.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Ibid., pp. 288-297.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 311.

For Soviet authors, the critical problem facing military art throughout War II was the application of concentrated combat power against the enemy's center of gravity. Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, who has been depicted by some Western analysts as a "Soviet Mahan," has identified that center of gravity as the great mass of the Wehrmacht deployed on the Eastern Front. Soviet forces defeated the Wehrmacht through a series of successive, deep operations in which the combined forces of Soviet fronts, air armies and fleets were applied to the direct destruction of enemy combat power.¹³⁹ As Gorshkov observed, close mutual support and cooperation [vzaimodeistvie] was itself a combat multiplier on both the defense and the offense:

The unity of the efforts of the army and navy improved their combat capabilities. With the Navy's direct support the ground forces radically changed the qualitative and quantitative correlation of forces to their advantage on the coastal axes. The Navy supplemented the efforts of the ground forces, gave them new qualities, strengthened the activeness of the defense, raised its flexibility and stability, made it insurmountable for the enemy. The Navy's support in the course of an offensive increased the mobility of the troops, the depth and results of the blows, made possible the build-up of the pace of conducting major operations against coastal groupings of enemy forces.¹⁴⁰

The issue from the Russian and Soviet perspective then is not just to have two or three or more arms but to possess the means and skills necessary to apply those arms decisively in a given operation at a particular time and in a particular place. As Rear

¹³⁹ S. G. Gorshkov, Morskaia moshch' gosudarstva 2nd Edition (Moscow: Veonizdat, 1979), pp. 222-223.

¹⁴⁰ S. Gorshkov, "Vzaimodeistvie Voenno-Morskogo Flota s sukhoputnymi voiskami," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, No. 11, (November 1978), p. 25.

Admiral V. Belli observed, ". . . vzaimodeistvie of ground forces with air and naval forces is the basis for the modern conduct of war." The mix of forces and the forms of conducting combined actions would differ depending upon the nature of the objective and the level of scale of combat - tactical, operational or strategic. However, Belli emphasized that on the basis of Soviet military science and experience: "From this point of view all operations at sea exist in one form or another of interaction and mutual support with operations ashore."¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ V. Belli, "Vzaimodeistvie flota s sukhputnymi voiskami," Voennaia mysl', No. 9, (September 1946), p. 37.

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